भारत स्वातन्त्र्य स्वर्ण-जयन्ती ग्रन्थमाला–४८

PATH OF LIBERATION

(Sanskrit Text, English Translation with Notes of Eight Minor Upanishads)

Pradeep



Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan
Deemed University
Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110058

भारत स्वातन्त्र्य स्वर्ण-जयन्ती ग्रन्थमाला-48

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आमुखम्

सर्वज्ञेन परमात्मना विश्वकल्याणभावनयैव वेदज्ञानमाविष्कृतम्। निखिलापि सम्भूतिर्वेदेष्वेव प्रतिष्ठिता वर्तते। मानवाभ्युदयार्थं समभीप्सितं यद् ज्ञानमुपनिषत्सु वर्तते नान्यत्र ततोऽधिकं क्वचित्। अत एव महर्षयः ''यतः सर्वाः प्रवृत्तयः'' तथा च ''सर्वज्ञानमयो हि सः'' इति निगद्यौपनिषदिकीं विचारधारां प्रकटयन्तः निजवाग्ज्योतिषा सांसारिकजनानां ज्ञानदीपं प्राज्वालयन्। उपनिषदां ज्ञानामृतधारास्वादनेन ज्योतिष्मन्तो विवेकिनः पुरुषाः मृत्युपाशान् छिन्दन्ति स्वकीयमोक्षमार्गमपि च प्रशस्तं कुर्वन्ति।

प्रदीपमहाभागेनोपनिबद्धमिदं Path of Liberation (मोक्षमार्ग)-नामकं पुस्तकमष्टलघूपनिषदां विशदव्याख्यात्मकं जिज्ञासून् उपकुर्याद् इति मे द्रढीयान् विश्वासः। अयं ग्रन्थः राष्ट्रिय-संस्कृत-संस्थानस्य भारत-स्वातन्त्र्य-स्वर्णजयन्ती-ग्रन्थमालायां ऊनपञ्चाशत्तमपुष्परूपेण प्राकाश्यं गमिष्यतीति मे महदामोदः प्रभवति। लेखकस्तु साधुवादभागस्ति यतो हि स यन्त्रशास्त्र(B.E.)-वाणिज्यप्रबन्धन (M.B.A.)विषयमधिकृत्य उच्चपदवीं लब्ध्वाऽपि सततं ब्रह्मचर्यवृत्तिना जीवनयापनं कुर्वन् स्वयमपि मोक्षमार्गे प्रयतत इति संस्कृतानुरागिणां कृते महत्पथदर्शकः।

सन्दर्भेऽस्मिन् भारतस्वातन्त्र्यस्वर्णजयन्तीग्रन्थमालां संयोजयन्तं शोधप्रकाशनविभागस्य सहायककुलसचिवं श्रीमन्तं डॉ०प्रकाशपाण्डेयम् अभिनन्दामि।

प्रकाशनक्षेत्रे परिमलप्रकाशनमधुना संस्कृतस्य सुविदितसंस्थानमस्ति। तदीयं प्रकाशनसंस्थानमस्य ग्रन्थस्य मुद्रणादिकार्यं सम्यक् व्यवस्थापितवदिति तस्याधिकारिणामपि धन्यवादाः अस्माभिरभिव्यज्यन्ते।

वेम्पटि कुटुम्ब शास्त्री

कुलपतिः

CONTENT

PREFACE

ॐ गणेशाय नमः। सरस्वत्यै नमः।
श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः। हरिः ओम् ।।

The Upanishads are the culmination of the Vedas. There is no philosophy higher than that of the Upanishads. Brahman can be known through Upanishads alone and not through other philosophies like Nyaya, Sankhya, Yoga, etc. The Ritualistic portion (*Karma Kanda*) of the Vedas is incapable of granting eternal peace. Therefore, the Vedas delineate Brahma Vidya for the seekers of eternal Truth. The Knowledge portion (*Jnana Kanda*) of the Vedas which deal with Brahma Vidya is known as Upanishads. Each branch of the Vedas has got one Upanishad. The Muktika Upanishad mentions about the names of 108 Upanishads. Of these, the ten Upanishads on which Bhagavad Pada Sri Adi Shankracharya had written his commentary are known as the Principal Upanishads and the remaining are called the Minor Upanishads. These minor Upanishads are in no way inferior to the principal Upanishads in terms of their content and philosophical import. These are called 'minor' because no authentic commentaries are available on these Upanishads and we have to depend upon the commentaries of the principal Upanishads in order to understand the true import of their teachings. This book presents translations and notes on eight minor Upanishads in the light of commentaries on ten principal Upanishads. Commentaries written by Bhagavad Pada Sri Adi Shankracharya on Brahma Sutra and Bhagavad-Gita have also been referred to wherever necessary. Sanskrit texts with the English translation and notes have been presented here in such a manner so that the true inner significance is not lost.

The Upanishads reveal the four facets of the glorious Aryan ideals practised by the ancient seers and sages. These four facets are described as Morality, Meditation, Wisdom and Liberation. It is due to lack of understanding on these four facets that the embodied soul undergoes cycles of births and deaths and finds no deliverance from the worldly afflictions. The Upanishads say that by leading a righteous and moral life of non-craving and non-attachment the mind becomes

pure and concentrated. Imbued with concentration the mind acquires noble vision and constantly abides in the spiritual heart. The mind then becomes aware of the divine nature of the soul and derives intuitive knowledge which is the basis of sacred ancient wisdom. Imbued with wisdom, the mind becomes free from false views and ignorance and attains liberation. The central theme of all the Upanishads is to remove various false views about the Self and reveal the identity of the Self (individual soul) and Brahman (Supreme Self)

The secret knowledge revealed in the Upanishads grants liberation here and now. It is called Kaivalya Mukti. Seekers of liberation will find these minor Upanishads very valuable in discriminating the Self from the non-Self. This endeavour is only to bring out the sublime glory of the Self. May, the Supreme Self who resides in the hearts of all beings, be pleased with this humble effort.

Date: 06/03/2008
Maha Shivaratri

PRADEEP

मुक्तिकोपनिषत्
(MUKTIKA UPANISHAD)*

*The Upanishad delineating liberation.

मुक्तिकोपनिषत्
MUKTIKOPANISHAD

Introduction:

The Muktikopanishad is the last among the 108 Upanishads and forms a part of Sukla Yajurveda. This Upanishad is unique in the sense that it mentions the name of all the 108 Upanishads along with their Shanti Mantras. This Upanishad deals with the abstruse subject like liberation in a very rational manner. Liberation is to be attained while living and not after death in some other world. According to this Upanishad, Kaivalya Mukti alone is real and all other types of liberation like Salokya, Samipya, Sarupya and Saujya are not absolute and hence unreal. It highlights the need of personal effort in Vasana Kshaya (effacement of latent impressions) and Mano-Nasha (dissolution of the mind) for the attainment of Jivan Mukti.

This Upanishad emphatically declares that Kaivalya Mukti is attained through the intuitive knowledge of Upanishads alone and not through any other means like worship, rituals, Yoga, Sankhya, etc. Kaivalya Mukti is not dependent upon worship of any personal God. It is to be attained through Self-knowledge alone. This Kaivalya Mukti is superior to the sovereignty over the earth, superior to going to heaven, superior to the lordship over all the worlds and even superior to the lordship of the cycles of creation.

Shanti Mantra:

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om,That (absolute unconditioned Brahman) is infinite, and this (conditioned Brahman or universe) is infinite. The infinite (universe) proceeds from infinite (Brahman). (Then), realising the infinitude of the infinite (univerase), it remains as the infinite (Brahman) alone.

Om ! Peace! Peace! Peace!

प्रथमोऽध्यायः

CHAPTER -1

VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

प्रथमः खण्डः

First Section

Longing for liberation:

अयोध्यानगरे रम्ये रत्नमण्टमध्यमे ।
सीताभरतसौमित्रिशत्रुघ्नाधैः समन्वितम् ।।१।।

Once in the delightful city of Ayodhya, Lord Rama, along with Sita, Bharata, Lakshmana and Satrughna, was seated in the middle of a hall studded with gems. (1)

सनकाद्यैर्मुनिगणैर्वसिष्ठाद्यैः शुकादिभिः ।
अन्यैर्भागवतैश्चापि स्तूयमानमहर्निशम् ।।२।।

(He is the one who is) glorified day and night by the sages like Sanaka, Vasistha and Suka who meditate (on the formless aspect of God or Self) as well as other devotees (who worship the formful aspect of God). (2)

धीविक्रियासहस्राणां साक्षिणं निर्विकारिणम् ।
स्वरूपध्याननिरतं समाधिविरमे हरिम् ।।३।।
भक्तया शुश्रूषया रामं स्तुवन् पप्रच्छ मारुतिः ।
राम त्वं परमात्माऽसि सच्चिदान्दलक्षणः ।।४।।

He was absorbed in contemplation of the Self in a state of Samadhi as the witness of the thousand modifications of the intellect (and) devoid of all changes (transformations). On awakening from this Samadhi, Hanuman serving Rama with devotion, reverentially asked. 'O Rama! You are the Supreme Being, of the nature of Being-Awareness-Bliss. (3,4)

इदानीं त्वां रघुश्रेष्ठ प्रणमामि मुहुर्मुहुः ।
त्वद्रूपं ज्ञातुमिच्छामि तत्त्वतो राम मुक्तये ।।५।।

You are the noblest one in the clan of Raghu. Salutations to Thee again and again. Pray, I now wish to know your real nature for (attaining) liberation. (5)

अनायासेन येनाहं मुच्येयं भवबन्धनात् ।
कृपया वद मे राम येन मुक्तो भवाम्यहम् ।।६।।

By which, I may attain freedom from the shackles of worldly life without much effort, please tell me that (knowledge) so that I may attain liberation. (6)

साधु पृष्टं महाबाहो वदामि श्रृणु तत्त्वतः।
वेदान्ते सुप्रतिष्ठोऽहं वेदान्तं समुपाश्रय।।७।।

O the mighty armed one (Hanuman)! You have rightly asked. I shall expound (the Vedanta philosophy). Listen to the true principles of this (philosophy). I am well established in Vedanta. I am the basis of Vedanta. (7)

Vedanta – the culmination of the Vedas:

वेदान्ताः के रघुश्रेष्ठ वर्तन्ते कुत्र ते वद ।
हनूमञ्छृणु वक्ष्यामि वेदान्तस्थितिमञ्जसा।।८।।

Please explain what is Vedanta and where is it? Hanuman! listen. I shall speak about (your) enquiry related to the Vednata. (8)

निश्वासभूता मे विष्णोर्वेदा जाताः सुविस्तराः।
तिलेषु तैलवद्वेदे वेदान्तः सुप्रतिष्ठितः ।।९।।

The Vedas in their entirety (all branches and ancillary knowledge related to the Vedas) are breaths of Mine, Vishnu (Lord of the universe). The Vedanta is well established in them, like oil in sesamum. (9)

राम वेदाः कतिविधास्तेषां शाखाश्च राघव।
तासूपनिषदः काः स्युः कृपया वद तत्त्वतः।।१०।।

Rama ! how many are the Vedas and how many branches do they

have? Raghava! Of these what are the Upanishads? Please explain to me the essence (a true principle of all these). (10)

ऋग्वेदादिविभागेन वेदाश्चत्वार ईरिता:।
तेषां शाखा ह्यनेका: स्युस्तासूपनिषदस्तथा।।११।।

Vedas are said to be four, the Rigveda, etc. There are many branches and Upanishads belonging to them. (11)

ऋग्वेदस्य तु शाखा: स्युरेकविंशतिसंख्यया।
नवाधिकशतं शाखा यजुषो मारुतात्मज।।१२।।

O Maruti ! the Rgveda has twenty one branches and the Yajurveda has one hundred and nine branches. (12)

सहस्रसंख्यया जाता: शाखा: साम्न: परन्तप।
अथर्वणस्य शाखा: स्यु: पञ्चाशद्भेदतो हरे।।१३।।

The Samaveda has thousand numbers of branches and the Atharvanveda has fifty branches. (13)

एकैकस्यास्तु शाखाया एकैकोपनिषन्मता।
तासामेकामृचं येन पठयते भक्तितो मयि।।१४।।
स मत्सायुज्यपदवीं प्रप्नोति मुनिदुर्लभाम्।

Each branch has one Upanishad. The one who studies even one verse of them with devotion to Me, attains union (Saayujya) with me which is difficult for even sages (to attain). (14)

Types of liberation:

राम केचिन्मुनि श्रेष्ठा मुक्तिरेकेति चक्षिरे।।१५।।
केचित्त्वन्नामभजनात् काश्यां तारोपदेशत:।
अन्ये तु सांख्ययोगेन भक्तियोगेन चापरे।।१६।।

Rama! Sages have revealed that supreme liberation is only of one kind. Some say that it is attained by chanting your name and Taraka Mantra at Kashi. Still others speak of Sankhya Yoga (path of

knowledge) and Bhakti Yoga (path of devotion). (15 & 16)

अन्ये वेदान्तवाक्यार्थविचारात् परमर्षयः।
सालोक्यादिविभागेन चतुर्धा मुक्तिरीरिता।।१७।।

Some say that one attains the supreme by contemplation on the Vedantic sayings (like I am Brahman). Some have declared liberation to be of four kinds-Salokya, etc.(17)

सः होवाच श्रीरामः-
कैवल्यमुक्तिरेकैव पारमार्थिकरूपिणी।
दुराचाररतो वाऽपि मन्नामभजनात् कपे।।१८।।
सालोक्यमुक्तिमाप्नोति न तु लोकान्तरादिकम् ।

Sri Rama said:
O Hanuman ! Kaivalya type of liberation alone is truly related to the spiritual realm. Even a person with bad conduct, by singing the glory of My name, can attain Salokya Mukti but not the other worlds. (18-19)

काश्यां तु ब्रह्मनालेऽस्मिन् मृतौ मत्तारमाप्नुयात् ।।१९।।
पुनरावृत्तिरहितां मुक्ति प्राप्नोति मानवः।

Dying in the state where the life force is impelled towards Brahman (Psychological meaning of Brahmanala has been taken here. Brahmanala is a pond with sacred water of life abiding in Brahman) in the holy city of light (psychological meaning of Kashi as the city of light has been taken where one is suffused with the light of Brahman), human beings attain liberation without rebirth (they follow the path of light on which many deities guide the soul for onward journey towards Brahmaloka). (19-20)

The idea is that a person, whose sins have been washed away through purificatory rites performed in the holy waters of *Thirtha* or pilgrimage and has thus propitiated the deities of water, attains the worlds that are equal to Brahman. The Mantra Pushpam also says that the knower of the source of waters attains the abode of "No Return".

यत्र कुत्रापि वा काश्यां मरणे स महेश्वरः।।२०।।
जन्तोर्दक्षिणकर्णे तु मत्तारं समुपादिशेत् ।

निर्धूताशेषपापौधो मत्सारूप्यं भजत्ययम् ।।२१।।
सैव सालोक्यसारूप्यमुक्तिरित्यभिधीयते ।

Dying in any other state (marked by striving for the light of Brahman but bereft of identity with this light) where sins have been washed away, the presiding deity guides the embodied soul on its journey through the Southern course by uttering Tarak Mantra and grants Sarupya on account of worshiping Me. The same is called Salokya and Sarupya Mukti (liberation). (20-22)

Attaining the world of the deity (personal God) is called Salokya Mukti. Sarupya Mukti refers to the oneness of form because of intense contemplation on the form of the deity. The soul enjoys felicity in the world of the deity. It feels intense freedom and bliss in the world of the deity. Thus this is spoken as a liberated state from worldly afflictions. But this state is not ever lasting. The soul has to reincarnate again to fulfill some divine mission.

सदाचाररतो भूत्वा द्विजो नित्यमनन्यधी: ।।२२।।
मयि सर्वात्मके भावो मत्सामीप्यं भजत्ययम् ।
सैव सालोक्यसारूप्यसामीप्या मुक्तिरिष्यते।।२३।।

An initiated (chaste) person, engaged in good conduct, with (his) mind constantly fixed upon Me, seeing Me as the Self of all, attains proximity with Me. The same is called Salokya, Sarupya and Samipya liberation. (22-23)

Right conduct, right view, right knowledge and constant worship of the personal God is essential for the attainment of Salokya, Sarupya and Samipya Mukti. Samipya Mukti refers to close proximity with the personal God.

गुरूपदिष्टमार्गेण ध्यायन् मद्रूपमव्ययम् ।
मत्सायुज्यं द्विजः सम्यग्भजेद्भ्रमरकीटवत् ।।२४।।

Meditating on my imperishable nature as per the directions of the preceptor, the chaste person who constantly seeks Me alone attains oneness with Me like an insect changing into a bee by constantly thinking of a bee. (24)

Observing right conduct and intensely meditating on the personal God according to the directions of the Guru, one attains Sayujya Mutkti. The soul attains oneness with the personal God and partakes many divine powers.

सैव सायुज्यमुक्तिः स्यादब्रह्मानन्दकरी शिवा ।
चतुर्विधा च या मुक्तिर्मदुपासनया भवेत्।।२५।।

This alone is Sayujya liberation bestowing the bliss of Brahman and auspiciousness. All the four types of liberation can be attained by worshipping Me. (25)

Lord Rama having made it clear that the highest result of Upasana (worship) is the four types of liberation, now puts forth the central theme of this Upanishad. These four types of liberation, though grant psychological happiness to the soul in the other worlds (like Brahmaloka, Goloka, Vaikuntha, etc.), they are not absolute and hence unreal. If we see in eternal time, we find that so many Brahmalokas, Golokas and Vaikunthas have been created and dissolved during innumerable numbers of the cycle of creation.

The four types of liberation are attained after the earthly sojourn of the soul to these worlds. Worship of the personal God, though, grants purity of mind, yet it does not obliterate all the impressions from consciousness. This consciousness survives the cosmic dissolution and brings forth creation due to these impressions. Kaivalya Mukti, in which all impressions from the consciousness are obliterated because of the efficacy of knowledge, alone is real. The Lord mentions that knowledge as delineated in the Upanishads is the means to this Kaivalya Mukti. Smriti also says that Kaivalya Mukti is attained through knowledge alone (ज्ञानादेवतु कैवल्यम्). The entire philosophy behind Kaivalya Mukti is that we shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make us free. It does not depend on the worship of any supra cosmic being as various schools of Bhakti (devotion) believe. Absolute liberation is possible only through knowledge and not through worship. The human mind seeks to express the highest reality through worship of a personal God (or Iswara). But this is only a relative truth. We can go beyond the Personal God by knowing the highest truth of the impersonal nature of Absolute Brahman. The

human mind can never grasp this absolute truth of impersonal Brahman. The Upanishads say that we are, in reality, identical with this absolute Brahman. Only we need to remove the illusion or Avidya. Knowledge of the Upanishads only removes this illusion which leads to Kaivalya Mukti.

Kaivalya Mukti through Upanishadic knowledge:

इयं कैवल्यमुक्तिस्तु केनोपायेन सिध्यति।
माण्डूक्यमेकवालं मुमुक्षूणां विमुक्तये।।२६।।

(Hanuman asks Lord Rama) By what means is this Kaivalya Mukti attained? (The Lord replies) Direct Knowledge of Mandukya Upanishad is enough for those who strive for final emancipation. (26)

The Mandukya Upanishad is one among the ten principle Upanishads and forms part of the Atharva Veda. This Upanishad discusses the nature of the ultimate reality by delineating the fourth state of Turiya which is beyond the three states of Viswa, Taijasa and Prajna. The one who dwells in this state of Turiya attains Kaivalya Mukti while living.

तथाऽप्यसिद्धं चेत् ज्ञानं दशोपनिषदं पठ।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वाऽचिरादेव मामकं धाम यास्यसि।।२७।।

If knowledge is not awakened through this Upanishad, study the ten (principle) Upanishads. Possessing the intuitive knowledge (as revealed in the Upanishads), you will soon attain My abode (of Brahmanhood). (27)

तथाऽपि दृढता नो चेद्विज्ञानस्याञ्जनासुत।
द्वात्रिंशाख्योपनिषदं समभ्यस्य निवर्तय ।।२८।।

O son of Anjana! If firmness in Brahman is still not attained through this knowledge, study the thirty two Upansiahds and then withdraw (turn inward). (28)

विदेहमुक्ताविच्छा चेदष्टोत्तरशतं पठ ।
तासां क्रमं सशान्तिं च श्रृणु वक्ष्यामि तत्वतः।।२९।।

If you desire Videha Mukti (disembodied state), study the 108 Upanishads. Also listen to their sequence. I will explain you the essence. (29)

The 108 Upanishads:

Slokas 30 to 39 mention about the name of all 108 Upanishads. Here these Upanishads are listed in tabular form with their corresponding English transliteration. Traditional form of Sanskrit Sloka has been avoided for the sake of clarity.

S.No	Name of Upanishad	S.No.	Name of Upanishad
1	ईशा (Isa)	2	केन (Kena)
3	कठ (Katha)	4	प्रश्न (Prasna)
5	मुण्डका (Mundaka)	6	माण्डूक्य (Mandukya)
7	तित्तिरि: (Tittiri)	8	ऐतरेय (Aitareya)
9	छान्दोग्य (Chandogya)	10	बृहदारण्यका (Brihadaranyaka)
11	ब्रह्म (Brahma)	12	कैवल्य (Kaivalya)
13	जाबाला (Jabala)	14	श्वेताश्व (Svetasva)
15	हंस (Hamsa)	16	आरुणि (Aruni)
17	गर्भ (Grabha)	18	नारायणा (Naranyana)
19	परमहंस (Paramhamsa)	20	अमृतबिन्दु (Amritbindu)
21	अमृतनाद (Amritnada)	22	अथर्वशिर: (Atharvasirah)
23	अथर्वशिखा (Atharvasikha)	24	मैत्रायणी (Maitrayini)
25	कौषितकीब्राह्मण (Kausitaki-Brahmana)	26	ब्रहजाबाला (Brihajabala)
27	नरसिहंतापनी (Narsimhatapini)	28	कालाग्निरुद्र (Kalagnirudra)
29	मैत्रेयी (Maitreya)	30	सुबाला (Subala)
31	क्षुरिका (Kshurika)	32	मन्त्रिका (Mantrika)
33	सर्वसार (Sarvasara)	34	निरालम्ब (Niralamba)
35	सुकरहस्य (Sukarahasya)	36	वज्रसूचिका (Vajrasuchika)
37	तेजोबिन्दु (Tejobindu)	38	नादबिन्दु (Nadabindu)
39	ध्यानबिन्दु (Dhyanabindu)	40	ब्रह्मविद्या (Brahmavidya)

41	योगतत्व (Yogatattva)	42	आत्मबोध (Atmabodha)
43	नारदापरिव्राजक (Naradaparivrajaka)	44	त्रिशिखि (Trisikhi)
45	सीता (Sita)	46	योगचूडामणि (Yogachudamani)
47	निर्वाण (Nirvana)	48	मण्डलब्रह्म (Mandalabrhmana)
49	दक्षिणामूर्ति (Dakshinamurthi)	50	शरभ (Sarabha)
51	स्कन्द (Skanda)	52	महानारायणा (Mahanarayana)
53	अद्वयतारक (Advayataraka)	54	रामरहस्य (Ramarahasya)
55	रामतापनी (Ramatapani)	56	वासुदेव (Vasudeva)
57	मुदग्ल (Mudgala)	58	शाण्डिल्य (Sandilya)
59	पैङ्गल (Paingala)	60	भिक्षु (Bhikshu)
61	महा (Maha)	62	शारीरिक (Sariraka)
63	योगशिखा (Yogasikha)	64	तुरीयातीत (Turiyatita)
65	संन्यास (Sanyasa)	66	परमहंसपरिव्राजक (Paramhamsa-parivrajaka)
67	अक्षमालिका (Akshamalika)	68	अव्यक्त (Avyakta)
69	एकाक्षर (Ekakshara)	70	अन्नपूर्णा (Annapurna)
71	सूर्या (Surya)	72	अक्षि (Akshi)
73	अध्यात्म (Adhyatma)	74	कुण्डिका (Kundika)
75	सावित्रि (Savitri)	76	आत्मा (Atma)
77	पाशुपैंत (Pasupat)	78	परंब्रह्म (Parambrahma)
79	अवधूतका (Avdhutaka)	80	त्रिपुरातपनी (Tripuratapani)
81	देवी (Devi)	82	त्रिपुरा (Tripura)
83	कठरुद्र (Katharudra)	84	भावना (Bhavana)
85	रुद्रहृदय (Rudrahridya)	86	योगकुण्डली (Yoga-Kundali)
87	भस्म (Bhasma)	88	रुद्राक्षा (Rudraksha)
89	गणपतिथर्वशीर्षम् (Ganapati - Atharvasirsam)	90	दर्शन (Darsana)

91	तारसार (Tarasara)	92	महावाक्य (Mahavakya)
93	पञ्चब्रह्म (Panchabrahma)	94	प्राणाग्निहोत्र (Praanagnihotra)
95	गोपालतापनी (Gopalatapini)	96	कृष्ण (Krishna)
97	याज्ञवल्क्य (Yajnavalkya)	98	वराहा (Varaha)
99	शाट्यायनी (Satyayani)	100	हयग्रीव (Hayagriva)
101	दत्तात्रेया (Dattatreya)	102	गरुड (Garuda)
103	कलिसन्तरण (Kalisantarana)	104	जाबालि (Jabali)
105	सौभाग्यलक्ष्मी (Saubhagyalakshmi)	106	सरस्वतीरहस्य (Sarasvatirahasya)
107	भऋच (Bahvricha)	108	मुक्तिका (Muktika)

एवमष्टोत्तरशतं भावनात्रयनाशनम् ।
ज्ञानवैराग्यदं पुंसां वासनात्रयनाशनम् ।।४०।।

These 108 Upanishads destroy the three types of apprehension pertaining to the body, mind and senses (which are obstacles in the contemplation of supreme consciousness). These Upanishads bestow upon a person the discriminative knowledge and dispassion leading to the effacement of three types of Vasanas (viz. Loka Vasana, Sastra Vasana and Deha Vasana). (40)

पूर्वोत्तरेषु विहिततत्तच्छान्तिपुरःसरम् ।
वेदविद्याव्रतस्नातदेशिकस्य मुंखात् स्वयम् ।।४१।।

He should study these along with the enjoined Shanti Patha in the preceding and the following, directly from a spiritual teacher who is well versed in the Vedic knowledge. (41)

गृहीत्वाऽष्टोत्तरशतं ये पठन्ति द्विजोत्तमाः ।
प्रारब्धक्षयपर्यन्तं जीवन्मुक्ता भवन्ति ते ।।४२।।

If the best of chaste (initiated in religious lore) persons study these 108 Upanishads till the effacement of Prarabdha Karma, they become Jivan Muktas (liberated in life). (42)

Prarabdha Karmas are not destroyed in the state of Jivan Mukti (liberation in life). For Jivan Mukti a person has to strive for the effacement of Vasanas and dissolution of the mind which destroys the cause of future births. Prarabdha Karma sustains the body of a Jivan Mukta because of which he also feels hungry and thirsty.

ततः कालवशादेव प्रारब्धे तु क्षयं गते ।
वैदेहीं मामकीं मुक्तिं यान्ति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ।।४३।।

In due course of time Prarabdha too get nullified (because of power of supreme knowledge). Then they undoubtedly attain Videha Mukti. (43)

Videha Mukti or release from body is attained when all bonds superimposed on the Self are destroyed by knowledge. These bonds are then not perceived or experienced because of firm conviction about the Self. With the dawn of this supreme knowledge of the Upanishads one simultaneously attains Videha Mukti and then Prarabdha Karma also become ineffective. In this state, though dwelling in the body one is not aware of it. Thus it is said to be a disembodied state of the soul. The one who is seeking this Videha Mukti need not wait till the dissolution of the existing physical body.

सर्वोपनिषदां मध्ये सारमष्टोत्तरं शतम्।
सकृच्छ्रवणमात्रेण सर्वाघौघनिकृन्तनम् ।।४४।।

The essence of all the Upanishads is these 108 (above mentioned Upanishads). Listening to these even once destroy all the sins (of a person). (44)

The efficacy of Upanishadic knowledge is being extolled here by mentioning that just hearing about this knowledge even once destroys all the sins. However, true knowledge can dawn only when all the three steps of Shravanam (listening), Mananam (contemplating) and Nididhyasanam (Internalising) are practiced. The next few verses describe the qualities of aspirants to whom this knowledge should be imparted.

Qualifications for Upanishadic knowledge:

मयोपदिष्टं शिष्याय तुभ्यं पवननन्दन।
इदं शास्त्रं मयाऽऽदिष्टं गुह्यमष्टोत्तरं शतम्।।४५।।
ज्ञानतोऽज्ञानतो वाऽपि पठतां बन्धमोचकम् ।

Hanuman! These 108 Upanishads should be kept secret and imparted to only a disciple like you and not to everybody. These destroy bondage even if studied with or without erudition. (45-46)

To get released from the bondage one need not be a scholar. The Lord in Bhagavad-Gita (4.39) says that a faithful aspirant attains knowledge. Supreme peace is attained with the dawn of this knowledge.

राज्यं देयं धनं देयं याचतः कामपूरणम् ।।४६।।
इदमष्टोत्तरशतं न देयं यस्य कस्यचित् ।

One may give away kingdom, wealth etc. if asked willingly. These 108 Upanishads should not be given away to everyone. (46-47)

If knowledge of these Upanishads is imparted to an unworthy person it will loose its sanctity and glory. The next Sloka mentions about those person who are disqualified for this sacred knowledge.

नास्तिकाय कृतघ्नाय दुराचाररताय वै ।।४७।।
मद्भक्तिविमुखायसच्छास्त्रगर्तेषु मुह्यते ।
गुरुभक्तिविहीनाय दातव्यं न कदाचन ।।४८।।

One should never impart these to the one who is an atheist (non-believer in the immortality of the Self), ungrateful (to noble souls), engaged in bad conduct, opposed to devotion to Me (the Self of all beings), misled by the wrong scriptures (of rival schools of thought who deny the existence of the Self), devoid of devotion to the spiritual teacher (essentially the inner Self). (47-48)

सेवापराय शिष्याय हितपुत्राय मारुते ।
मद्भक्ताय सुशीलाय कुलीनाय सुमेधसे ।।४९।।
सम्यक् परीक्ष्य दातव्यमेवमष्टोत्तरं शतम् ।
यः पठेच्छृणुयाद्वाऽपि स मामेति न संशयः ।।५०।।

These 108 Upanishads should be imparted after thoroughly examining the seeker. It should be imparted to the one, who renders selfless service, lives as a disciple, or behaves as a worthy son; who is a devotee, of noble conduct, born in a noble family and bestowed with good intellect. Such a person if he studies or even hears, he will undoubtedly attain oneness with Me (the Self). (49-50)

तदेतदृचाऽभ्युक्तम् -

विद्या ह वै ब्राह्मणमाजगाम गोपाय मां शेवधिष्टेऽहमस्मि।
असूयकायानृजवे शठाय मा मा ब्रूया वीर्यवती तथा स्याम्।।५१।।

The following verse also states this very fact:
Goddess of knowledge went to the knower of Brahman and said 'Keep me secret, I am your treasure; do not impart me to the one who is jealous, immoral, and deceitful. Then I shall be powerful.'(51)

यमेव विद्याश्रुतमप्रमत्तं मेधाविनं ब्रह्मचर्योपपन्नम् ।
अस्मा इमामुपसन्नाय सम्यक् परीक्ष्य दद्याद्वैष्णवीमात्मनिष्ठाम् ।५२।

'The one who is learned, attentive, shrewd and celibate - after examining him carefully, impart (me) to him who is devoted to the Self.' (52)

Sage Sanat-Sujata in Mahabharata (43.2) says that Brahma- Vidya can be awakened through Brahmacharya alone. He goes on to say that the aspirant gets one quarter of Brahma Vidya by living with Guru, one quarter by his own perseverance and enthusiasm, one quarter by the study of Sastra and remaining one quarter over a period of time through the process of *Shravanam*, *Mananam* and *Nididhyasanam*. Therefore, only those who are pure (celibate), shrewd (adept in understanding the true import of scriptures) and attentive (having single minded devotion to the Self) are qualified for this Vidya. The Hamsa Upanishad also commences its exposition with the statement that the knowledge of this Upanishad should be imparted to the *Brahmachari* of peaceful mind (Santa), self-controlled (Danta) and devoted to the Guru (Guru-Bhakta).

द्वितीय: खण्ड:

Second Section

Invocation of Shanti Mantras:

अथ हैनं श्रीरामचन्द्रं मारुतिः पप्रच्छ :
Then Maruthi asked Sri Ramchandra thus:

ऋग्वेदादिविभागेन प्रथक् शान्तिमनुब्रूहति।
Please tell me the Shanti Mantras of different Vedas (Rig Veda, etc.) separately.

स होवाच श्रीरामः -
ऐतरेयकौषीतकिनादबिन्द्वात्मप्रबोधनिर्वाणमुलाक्षमालिकात्रिपुरासौभाग्यबह्वृचना ऋग्वेदगतानां दशसंख्याकानामुपषिदां वाङ्मे मनसीति शान्तिः।।१।।

Sri Ram Chandra then said:
The Aitareya, the Kausitaki-Brahmana, the Nadabindu, the Atma-Prabodha, the Nirvana, the Mudgala, the Akshamalika, the Tripura, the Saubhagya-Lakshmi, and the Bahvrica – these ten Upanishads forming part of the Rig-Veda, have the following Shanti Mantra - "May my speech be based on the mind..." (1)

ईशावास्यबृहदारण्यजाबालहंसपरमहंससुबालमन्त्रिकानिरालम्बत्रिशिखी ब्रह्मणमण्डलब्राह्मणाद्वयतारकपैङ्गलभिक्षुतुरीयातीताध्यात्म तारसारयाज्ञवल्कयशाट्यायनीमुकितकानां शुक्लयजुर्वेद गतानामेकोनिविंशतिसंख्याकानामुपनिषदां पूर्णमद इदि शान्तिः ।।२।।

The Isavasya, the Brihadaranyaka, the Jabala, the Hamsa, the Paramhamsa, the Subala, the Mantrika, the Niralamba, the Trisikhibrahmana, the Mandala Brahmana, the Advayataraka, the Paingala, the Bhikshu, the Turiyatita, the Adhyatma, the Tarsara, the Yajnavalkya, the Satyayani and the Muktika – these nineteen Upanishads forming part of the Sukla-Yajur Veda, have this Shanti Mantra - "That (supreme Brahman) is infinite. This (qualified Brahman) is infinite..." (2)

कठवल्लीतैत्तिरीयाब्रह्मकैवल्यश्वेताश्वरगर्भनारायणामृतबिन्द्वमृतनाद
कालाग्निरुद्रक्षुरिकासर्वसारशुकरहस्यतेजोबिन्दुध्यानबिन्दुब्रह्मविद्यायोगतत्त्व
दक्षिणामूर्तिस्कन्दशारीरकयोगशिखैकाक्षराक्ष्यवधूतकठरुद्रहृदययोगकुण्डलिनी
पञ्चब्रह्मप्राणाग्निहोत्रवराहकलिसंतारणसरस्वतीरहस्यानां कृष्णयजुर्वेदगतानां
द्वात्रिंशत्संख्याकानामुपनिषदां सह नाववत्विति शान्तिः ।।३।।

The Kathavalli, the Taittiriya, the Brahma, the Kaivalya, the Svetasvatara, the Garbha, the Narayana, the Amritbindu, the Amritnad, the Kalagnirudra, the Kshurika, the Sarvasara, the Sukarahashya, the Tejobindu, the Dhyanbindu, the Brahmavidya, the Yogatattva, the Dakshinamurthi, the Skanda, the Sariraka, the Yogasikha, the Ekakshara, the Akshi, the Katharudra, the Rudrahridaya, the Yogakundalini, the Panchabrahma, the Pranagnihotra, the Varaha, the Kalisamtarana and the Saraswatirahashya – these thirty two Upanishads forming part of the Krishna Yajurveda have this Shanti Mantra – "May (Brahman) protect us both (the teacher and disciple)……"(3)

केनच्छान्दोग्यारुणिमैत्रायणिमैत्रेयीवज्रसूचिकायोगचूडामणिवासुदेव
महत्संन्यासाव्यक्तकुण्डिकासावित्रीरुद्राक्षजाबालदर्शनजाबालीनां
सामवेदगतानां षोडशंख्याकानामुपनिषदामाप्यायन्त्विति शान्तिः।।४।।

The Kena, the Chandogya, the Aruni, the Maitrayani, the Maitreya, the Vajrasuchika, the Yogachudamani, the Vasudeva, the Maha, the Sannyasa, the Avyakta, the Kundika, the Savitri, the Rudaksha, the Jabala Darshana and the Jabali – these sixteen Upanishads forming part of the Samaveda have the following Shanti Mantra - "May my limbs, speech, vital force, eyes, ears, strength and all organs grow vigorous……" (4)

प्रश्नमुण्डकमाण्डूक्याथर्वशिरोऽथर्वशिखाबृहज्जाबालनृसिंहतापनी
नारदपरिव्राजकसीताशरभमहानारायणरामरहस्यरामतापनीशाण्डिल्य
परमहंसपरिव्राजकान्नपूर्णासूर्यात्मपाशुपतपरब्रह्मत्रिपुरातपनदेवीभावना
भस्मजाबालगणपतिमहावाक्यगोपालतपनृष्णहयग्रीवदत्तात्रेयगारुडानाम
थर्ववेदगतानामेकात्रिंशत्संख्याकानामुपनिषदां भद्रं कर्णेभिरिति शान्तिः ।।५।।

The Prasna, the Mundaka, the Mandukya, the Atharvashira, the Atharvashikha, the Brahjjabala, Narsimhatapini, the

Naradaparivrajaka, the Sita, the Sarabha, the Mahanarayana, the Ramarahashya, the Ramtapini, the Sandilya, the Paramhamsaparivrajaka, the Annapurna, the Surya, the Atma, the Pashupata, the Parambrahma, the Tripurtapini, the Devi, the Bhavana, the Bhasmajabala, the Ganapati, the Mahavakya, the Gopalatapini, the Krishna, the Hayagriva, the Dattatreya and the Garuda- these thirty one Upanishads forming part of the Atharva Veda have the following Shanti Mantra- "May we hear auspicious words with the ears……….." (5)

मुमुक्षवः पुरुषाः साधनचतुष्टयसंपन्नाः श्रद्धावन्तं सत्कुलभवं श्रोत्रियं शास्त्रवात्सल्यं गुणवन्तमकुटिलं सर्वभूतहिते रतं दयासमुद्रं सदगुरुं विधिवदुपसंगम्योपहारपाणयोऽष्टोत्तरशतोपनिषदं विधिवदधीत्य श्रवणमनन निदिध्यासनानि नैरन्तर्येण कृत्वा प्रारब्धक्षयाद्देहत्रयभङ्गं प्राप्योपाधि विनिर्मुक्तघटाकाशवत् परिपूर्णता विदेहमुक्तिः। सैव कैवल्यमुक्तिरिति।।६।।

Those people who are Seekers of liberation and endowed with the four virtues (viz. Sama, Dama, Uparati and Titiksha) should approach in traditional manner with gifts in the hands, a spiritual teacher who is faithful, belonging to a noble clan, well versed in the Vedas, follower of the sacred texts (not a heterodox), engaged in the welfare of all, full of compassion and learn these 108 Upanishads in a traditional manner through continuous listening, reflection and deep meditation. Then upon effacement of all accumulated actions the three bodies are destroyed and a non-qualified state of perfection called Videha Mukti is attained like the space in an earthen pot (which is non-different from the space outside). This indeed is Kaivalya Mukti or absolute liberation. (6)

When the cause is removed the effect also becomes non-existent. Here accumulated actions are the cause of the embodied state, which is an effect. Knowledge of the Upanishads destroys this false identification of the soul and it no longer identifies itself with the three bodies, viz. gross, subtle and causal. In reality, knowledge does not destroy these three bodies but, because of non-identification with these three bodies, the soul is said to be in a disembodied state. A Videha Mukta also dwells in the body but he is not identified with it. Because of want of any desire, the subtle body which is responsible for rebirth is said to be non-existent.

अत एव ब्रह्मलोकस्था अपि ब्रह्ममुखाद्वेदान्तश्रवणादि कृत्वा तेन सह कैवल्यं लभन्ते । अतः सर्वेषां कैवल्यमुक्तिज्ञानमार्गे मात्रेणोक्ता न कर्मसांख्य- योगोपासनादिभिरित्युपनिषत् ।।७।।

Similarly, even in the Brahmaloka, the souls (apparently plural sense is used) attain Videha Kaivalyam (disembodied state) only after hearing the knowledge of these Upanishads from his (Brahmas) mouth. Therefore for everyone Kaivalya Mukti is stated to be (attainable) through the path of knowledge alone; not through Karma (rituals), Sankhya, Yoga or worship. This is the Upanishad. (7)

People follow various paths to attain liberation. Some follow ritualistic Philosophy of Poorva Mimansa. It has been very well proved that these rituals grant only heavenly pleasures and not immortality. There are some who believe in Sankhya philosophy which does not accept any conscious being (Iswara) as the cause of the creation and affirms that both the souls (Purusha) and nature (Prakriti) are eternal. The Sankhya maintains that this knowledge of Purusha and Prakriti leads to liberation. We will have to go beyond this philosophy because it teaches plurality of souls and the eternal nature of three Gunas (qualities). The followers of Yoga Philosophy hold that self-control, meditation and Samadhi will lead to Kaivalya. This Philosophy is similar to Sankhya except that it believes in Iswara as the cause of the universe. This is also a dualistic philosophy and not a perfect system for attaining Kaivalya Mukti. It has already been mentioned that worship of a personal God grants only Salokya, Samipya, Sarupya and Sayujya Mukti and not Kaivalya. This Sloka makes it very clear that the intuitive knowledge of the Upanishads alone grants absolute liberation. The Shruti also says that by knowing Him (the Brahman as revealed in the Upanishads) one becomes immortal here in this very body. There is no other path (नान्यः पन्था अयनाय विद्यते). Even in the Brahmaloka absolute liberation is attained only after intuitively realising the knowledge of the Upanishads.

इति प्रथमोऽध्यायः

Thus ends the first chapter

द्वितीयोऽध्याय:

CHAPTER-2

Jivan Mukti and Videha Mukti:

तथा हैनं श्रीरामचन्द्रं मारुतिः पप्रच्छ । केयं जीवन्मुक्तिः विदेहमुक्तिः किं वा तत्र प्रमाणं कथं वा तत्सिद्धिः सिद्धया व किं प्रयोजनमिति। स होवाच श्रीरामः । पुरुषस्य कतृत्वभोकृत्वसुखदुःखादि लक्षणश्चित्तधर्मः क्लेश-रूपत्वाद्बन्धो भवति। तन्निरोधनं जीवनमुक्तिः। उपाधिविनिर्मुघटाकाशवत् प्रारब्धक्षयाद्विदेहमुक्तिः। जीवनमुक्तिविदेहमुक्त्योरष्टोत्तरशतोपनिषदः प्रमाणम्। कर्तृत्वादिदुःखनिवृत्तिद्वारा नित्यानन्दावाप्तिः प्रयोजनं भवति । तत् पुरुष-प्रयत्नसाध्यं भवति । यथा पुत्रकामेष्टिना पुत्रं वाणिज्यादिना वित्तं ज्योतिष्टोमेन स्वर्गं तथा पुरुषप्रयत्नसाध्यवेदान्तश्रवणादिजनितसमाधिना जीवनमुक्त्यादि-लाभो भवति। सर्ववासनाक्षयत्तल्लाभः।।१-१।।

Then Maruti asked Sri Ramchandra:
What is this Jivan Mukti, Videha Mukti? What is its proof? How is it attained? What is its aim?

Sri Rama said:
For a man there is bondage due to doership and enjoyership, pleasure and pain, etc., causing afflictions to Chitta Dharma. Cessation of that is Jivan Mukti. Videha Mukti is a non-qualified state (unbound by body) similar to the space in a Jar (unbound by its shape) (arising) after destruction of Prarabdha, etc. The 108 Upanishads are the proof for Jivan Mukti and Videha Mukti. The aim is to attain eternal bliss by eliminating the sorrow arising due to doership, etc. This is attained through personal effort. Just as a son is begot through Putra Kamesti sacrifice, wealth by trade, etc., and heaven by Jyoistoma sacrifice similarly, Jivan Mukti, etc., is attained through Samadhi, which arises due to personal effort involving listening (reflection and meditation), etc. of Vedanta. The result of this (Mukti) is destruction of all Vasanas (latent impressions or cravings). (1-1)

Jivan Mukti is a state in which the soul constantly delights in the Self, disports in the Self and performs works for the sake of the Self alone. The Upanishads are the authority in describing the state of Jivan Mukti and Videha Mukti. The Chandogya Upanishad (7.1.3) says that the one who is established in the Self goes beyond all sorrows (तरति

शोकमात्मवित्). The Mundaka Upanishads (3.1.4) says that such a one is foremost among the knowers of Brahman. (आत्मक्रीड आत्मरतिः क्रियावानेष ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्टः)

True Chitta Dharma is to reflect on the Self and inculcate the feeling that I am the Self. But because of ignorance the feeling of doership binds it and causes innumerable afflictions. Through vigorous personal effort one can make the Chitta free from all these afflictions. Then Chitta Dharma becomes natural. Our personal effort should be directed to acquire this Chitta Dharma. The next few verses mention about the attainment of this Chitta Dharma through personal effort.

Necessity of personal effort:

अत्र श्लोका भवन्ति -

Here are these verses.

उच्छास्त्रं शास्त्रितं चेति पौरुषं द्विविधं मतम् ।
तत्रोच्छास्त्रमनर्थाय परमार्थाय शास्त्रितम् ।।१।।

Personal effort is said to be twofold, viz. one that is enjoined by the Sastras (sacred scriptures) and the other which is prohibited. Misfortune results from those prohibited by the Sastra and the highest state (liberation) accrues from those prescribed by the Sastras. (1)

The aim of all the Sastras is Atmanivesanam (आत्माऽन्वेषण) – to investigate and to reveal the true nature of the Self. The injunctions of such Sastras are indispensable in our personal effort. The Bhagavad-Gita (16.23) also says thus:

यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते कामकारतः।
न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति न सुखं न परां गतिम्।।

"Ignoring the percept of the scriptures, he who acts under the impulsive force of lust, he does not attain perfection, happiness, or the supreme Goal."

But following the injunctions of the Sastras alone will not lead to the highest goal. The true import of the injunctions of the Sastras is effacement of latent impressions (Vasanas) and dissolution of mind (Mano-Nasha) which makes the aspirant competent for the Self-

knowledge. The injunctions of the Sastras yield only limited results and are useful till one attains steadfastness in the Self-knowledge. When one has attained steadfastness in Self-knowledge, the injunctions of the Sastras become superfluous. The Lord also says in the Bhagavad-Gita (2.46) thus:

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।
तावान्सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ।।

"To the Brahmana who has known the Self, all the Vedas are as much useful as the water in a pond when there is a flood everywhere."

Thus the next verse shows the futility of extreme passion for the injunctions of the Sastras.

लोकवासनया जन्तोः शास्त्रवासनयाऽपि च ।
देहवासनया ज्ञानं यथावन्नैव जायते ।।२।।

True knowledge does not arise in one due to latent worldly, bodily impressions and also because of too much passion for the scriptures. (2)

Loka Vasana consists of the tendency to run after world or society for name, fame, position, etc. Deha Vasana is the tendency to covet a faultless body through various means like rituals, cosmetics, herbs and various recipes of hygienic food. Sastra Vasana involves scholarship in various branches of knowledge like Code of rituals, Material Science, Arts, Music, Astrology, Astronomy, etc. Such scholars struggle hard to acquire a sharp intelligence, a sweet voice, the art of oration and various other skills which will help them to earn their livelihood. These are said to be obstacles in Self-knowledge.

द्विविधो वासनाव्यूहः शुभश्चैवाशुभश्च सः।
वासनौघेन शुद्धेन तत्र चेदनुनीयसे ।।३।।
तत्क्रमेणाशु तैनेव मामकं पदमाप्नुहि ।

The whole realm of Vasanas is of two kinds viz. good and evil. Of the two if you are led by the good, then, gradually in that manner (independent of any other effort), you will attain My state. (3-4)

Good Vasana is the desire to be free from the worldly bondage. Giving up all false impressions related to the body (like caste, clan, lineage, physical characteristics, etc.), world (social status, profession, name, fame, etc.) and Sastras (scholarship in various branches of knowledge, desire to worship personal deity through various rituals, etc.) and inculcating the feeling that 'I am Brahman' is said to be the good Vasana. All other Vasanas like Loka Vasana, Sastra Vasana and Deha Vasana are said to be bad. Prompted by the good Vasana a person makes a vigorous effort to know the Self, to efface the latent impressions and for the dissolution of the mind. This type of personal effort leads to Jivan Mukti. Every one is subjected to the impressions of past actions; therefore the next verse shows the necessity of personal effort to eliminate these impressions.

अथ चेदशुभो भावस्त्वां योजयति संकटे ।।४।।
प्राक्तनस्तदसौ यत्नाज्जेतव्यो भवता कपे ।

But if the evil propensities (impressions) are leading you towards difficulties then you must overcome (them) with effort. (4-5)

The Sastras show the efficacy of personal effort in overcoming the evil propensities. Many rituals have been enjoined by the Sastras for the effacement of sins committed by us in our daily lives. These rites check the evil propensities and thus save the person from evil consequences. The mind should be made tranquil with the help of these anti-evil rites enjoined by the Sastras. The next two verses bring out the necessity of personal effort in making the mind disciplined.

शुभाशुभाभ्यामं मार्गाभ्यां वहन्ति वासनासरित् ।।५।।
पौरुषेण प्रयत्नेन योजनीया शुभे पथि ।
अशुभेषु समाविष्टं शुभेष्वेवावतारयेत् ।।६।।

The latent impressions, like rivers, flow through good and evil courses; through personal effort it should be directed towards the good path. If the mind is attached to evil, then bring it on the good path. (5-6)

अशुभाच्चालितं याति शुभं तस्मादपीतरत् ।
पौरुषेण प्रयत्नेन लालयेच्चित्तबालकम् ।।७।।

The mind resorts to good when withdrawn from evil. The mind, which is like a child, should be disciplined through personal effort. (7)

द्रागभ्यासवशाद्याति यदा ते वासनोदयम् ।
तदाऽभ्यासस्य साफल्यं विद्धि त्वमरिमर्दन।।८।।

When through practice, good impressions soon arise in the mind then it is the positive result of your (O destroyer of the enemies) repeated efforts. (8)

One should not doubt if the mind is tamed soon after spiritual practices. Quick success may come because of the results of repeated efforts in many previous births. However, if Siddhi is attained soon through spiritual practices like Japa Yoga, Raja Yoga, etc., one should continue to engage one self in acquiring good impressions. The next verse justifies such practice because it is harmless in nature.

संदिग्धायामपि भृशं शुभामेव समाचर ।
शुभायां वासनावृद्धौ न दोषाय मरुत्सुत ।।९।।

Even if there is a doubt (about the possibility of quick results), engage yourself in acquiring good impressions. O Maruthi ! there is no harm whatsoever in the growth of good impressions. (9)

Triple means for Jivan Mukti:

The next few verses lay down the essential conditions for the attainment of Jivan Mukti. There are three means prescribed in the various Upanishads which are the mutual cause of one another. These three means are - knowledge of Truth (*Tattva-Jnana*), effacement of latent impressions (*Vasana-Kshaya*) and dissolution of the mind (*Mano-Nasha*). By the practice of these three means all the fetters of the heart are shattered. This leads to Jivan Mukti.

वासनाक्षयविज्ञानमनोनाशा महामते ।
समकालं चिराभ्यस्ता भवन्ति फलदा मताः ।।१०।।

O wise one! When effacement of latent impressions, awakening of knowledge, and the annihilation of the mind are practised

simultaneously for a long time, then it yields the intended result (viz. Jivan Mukti). (10)

त्रयमेते समं यावन्नाभ्यस्ताश्च पुनः पुनः ।
तावन्न पदसंप्राप्तिर्भवत्यापि समाशतैः ।।११।।

Until these three means are repeatedly practised together, that state (of Jivan Mukti) is not attained even after hundred years. (11)

एकैकशो निषेव्यन्ते यद्येते चिरमप्यलम् ।
तन्न सिद्धिं प्रयच्छन्ति मन्त्राः संकीर्णता इव ।।१२।।

If practised individually (one at a time) with strenuous effort, even for a long time, they do not yield the requisite result just as the Mantras chanted incoherently do not produce the desired result. (12)

These three means are mutually related to one another. True knowledge can dawn only when all impressions of world, body and scriptures have been eliminated. Effacement of impressions is incomplete till mind is dissolved. Again dissolution of mind is impossible till all impressions are destroyed. True knowledge alone can efface all the false impressions. Thus these three means have cyclic relationships as cause and effect. This makes it very difficult to accomplish perfection in these three means and it requires persistent effort.

त्रिभिरेतैश्चिराभ्यस्तैर्हृदयग्रन्थयो दृढाः ।
निःशंकमेव त्रुट्यन्ति बिसच्छेदादगुणा इव।।१३।।

Through ceaseless practice of these three means the fetters of heart are definitely shattered just as the lotus fiber in its stem when cut. (13)

जन्मान्तरशताभ्यस्ता मिथ्या संसारवासना।
सा चिराभ्यासयोयोगेन विना न क्षीयते क्वचित् ।।१४।।

The false worldly impressions accumulated over hundred births cannot be destroyed without continuous practice. (14)

तस्मात् सोम्य प्रयत्नेन पौरुषेण विवेकिना ।
भोगेच्छां दूरतस्त्यक्त्वा त्रयमेव समाश्रय ।।१५।।

Therefore, O noble one, a discriminating person firmly gives up the desire of enjoyment from a safe distance through self effort, and practises these three. (15)

Worldly impressions are never uprooted through self-indulgence. Self-restraint is the only way for effacement of impressions and dissolution of the mind. The Manu Smiriti (2.94) also says that impressions (desires) are never quenched through enjoyment. It only increases the cravings just as fire grows more when Ghee (clarified butter) is poured into it. This Upanishad categorically refutes the common belief of modern psychologists and many medical doctors that self-restraint leads to physical and mental disorder. The Upanishad exhorts the aspirant to renounce all the desires and be liberated in life.

Effacement of latent impressions (desires):

तस्माद्वासनया युक्तं मनो बद्धं विदुर्बुधाः ।
सम्यग्वासनया त्यक्तं मुक्तिमित्याभिधीयते ।
मनोनिर्वासनीभावमाचराशु महाकपे ।।१६।।

Therefore, the wise perceive the mind under bondage due to desires (impressions); it is considered to be liberated when free from desires entirely. O Hanuman, strive to attain impressions free mind. (16)

सम्यगालोचनात् सत्याद्वासना प्रविलीयते ।
वासनाविलये चेतः शममायाति दीपवत् ।।१७।।

Desires (impressions) get obliterated by discerning the truth absolutely. The desires being effaced without a trace, the mind gets extinguished like a lamp (without oil). (17)

वासनां संपरित्यज्य मयि चिन्मात्रविग्रहे ।
यस्तिष्ठति गतव्यग्रः सोऽहं सच्चित्सुखात्मकः।।१८।।

He, who by giving up the desires entirely meditates on my transcendental form free from agitations; he is one with my Self -

Being, Awareness and Bliss. (18)

समाधिमथ कर्माणि मा करोतु करोतु वा ।
हृदयेनात्तसर्वेहो मुक्त एवोत्तमाशयः ।।१९।।

That noble soul, who is bereft of desires in the heart, is indeed liberated whether he performs or does not perform meditation or rituals. (19)

नैष्कर्म्येण न तस्यार्थस्तस्यार्थोऽस्ति न कर्मभिः ।
न समाधानजाप्याभ्यां यस्य निर्वासनं मनः।।२०।।

He, whose mind is desireless, has no necessity to perform actions or refrain from actions; nor he has any need of meditation or Japa (mental repetition of sacred mystical formula). (20)

विचारितमलं शास्त्रं चिरमुद्ग्राहितं मिथः।
सत्यक्तंवासनान्मौनादृते नास्त्युत्तमं पदम् ।।२१।।

The essence of all scriptural deliberation and the synthesis of all diverse views is that there is no higher state than the state of a sage who has renounced all desires. (21)

वासनाहीनमप्येतच्चक्षुरादीन्द्रियं स्वतः ।
प्रवर्तते बहिः स्वार्थे वासना नात्र कारणम् ।।२२।।

Even though desireless, these sense organs like eye etc. function instinctively amidst external objects; desire is not the cause of such activities of the sense organs. (22)

Thus for a sage whose mind is desireless, sense organs continue to function as normal and the body does not become lifeless. His mind ceases from all activities and attains a state of inaction but not the sense organs.

अयत्नोपनतेष्वक्षि दृग्द्रव्येषु यथा पुनः ।
नीरागमेव पतति तद्वत् कार्येषु धीरधीः ।।२३।।

Just as the eyes fall voluntarily without attachment on the approaching objects on the horizon (for showing the way), so the mind

of wise man functions in everyday life (voluntarily without attachment to the world). (23)

The desireless mind of the wise person ever remains tranquil inspite of performing everyday activities for the sustenance of life. He engages himself in selfless activities but he is not afflicted by the plight of the people to the least extent because of the absence of any attachment to the world.

भावसंवित्प्रकटितामनुरूपां च मारुते ।
चित्तस्योत्पत्त्युपरमां वासनां मुनयो विदुः ।।२४।।

O Maruti! the sages know about the other creation of the mind due to desire which is manifested by the consciousness. (24)

दृढाभ्यस्तपदार्थैकभावनादतिचञ्चलम् ।
चित्तं संजायते जन्मजरामरणकारणम् ।।२५।।

Intense thought (desire) of objects makes the mind wavering; agitation (literal meaning growth) of the mind causes birth, old age and death. (25)

वासनाऽऽवेशतः प्राणस्पन्दस्तेन च वासना ।
क्रियते चित्तबीजस्य तेन बीजाङ् कुरक्रमः ।।२६।।

Because of desires (impressions) there is pulsation of Praana (life force) and by pulsation of Praana arises desires (impression) like seed and sprout series. (26)

द्वे बीजे चित्तवृक्षस्य प्राणस्पन्दनवासने ।
एकस्मिंश्च तयोः क्षीणे क्षिप्रं द्वे अपि नश्यतः ।।२७।।

Life force and desires are the two seeds for the mind tree, by the destruction of either both are destroyed simultaneously. (27)

The Yoga Psychology states that when there is pulsation of Praana (*Praana-Spanda*) there is movement of mind (*Chitta-Vritti*) and craving for sense objects (*Vasana*). *Laya Yoga* aims at dissolution of mind by restraining the Praana in Sushumna Nadi. According to this Upanishad these three have cyclic relationships as cause and effect.

असङ्गव्यवहारत्वाद्भवभावनवर्जनात् ।
शरीरनाशदर्शित्वाद्वासना न प्रवर्तते ।
वासनासंपरित्यागाचित्तं गच्छत्याचित्तताम् ।।२८।।

Desires (impressions) do not arise by leading a simple life with detached behaviour, keeping away from worldly thoughts and knowing the mortal nature of the body. By renunciation of desires mind becomes no-mind. (28)

The Annapurna Upanishad (4.88) also says that by renunciation of all desires the mind becomes no-mind.

अवासनत्वात् सततं यदा न मनुते मनः ।
अमनस्ता तदोदेति परमोपशमप्रदा ।।२९।।

When the mind does not function due to the state of desirelessness, then the state of no-mind arises which confers supreme peace (29).

अव्युत्पन्नमना यावद्भवानज्ञाततत्पदः ।
गुरुशास्त्रप्रमाणैस्तु निर्णीतं तावदाचर ।।३०।।

As long as the mind is not fully evolved and that supreme state (identity of Self and Brahman) is not yet realised, practice what has been laid down by the teacher, scripture and other valid means of knowledge. (30)

ततः पक्वकषायेण नूनं विज्ञातवस्तुना ।
शुभोऽप्यसौ त्वया त्याज्यो वासनौघो निरोधिना ।।३१।।

When all the worldly attachments are burnt and ultimate reality is directly realised, then you should give up entire lot of desires, even the good ones, for mind restraint. (31)

The Vedanta philosophy lays a great emphasis on renunciation of all desires for perfect mind restraint. It is the belief of common people that a person is an atheist if he does not worship or praise God. But the Vedanta philosophy says that a person is an atheist if he does not renounce desires even if he worships thousands of Gods and Goddesses external to one's own Self.

Dissolution of the mind:

The previous section describes about the renunciation of desires. The present section now deals with the dissolution of the mind.

द्विविधश्चित्तनाशोऽस्ति सरुपोऽरुप एव च ।
जीवन्मुक्तौ सरूपः स्यादरूपो देहमुक्तिगः ।।३२।।

Dissolution of the mind is of two kinds: with form and without form. In Jivan Mukti it is with form while in Videha Mukti it is without form. (32)

अस्य नाशमिदानीं त्वं पावने श्रृणु सादरम् ।
चित्तनाशाभिधानं हि यदा ते विद्यते पुनः ।।३३।।
मैत्र्यादिभिर्गुणैर्युक्तं शान्तिमेति न संशयः ।

O the noble one! Now you hear about the dissolution of it (mind) with attention. When the mind is destroyed, undoubtedly there arises peace comprising all the qualities like cordial relationships, etc. (33-34)

भूयोजन्मविनिर्मुक्तं जीवन्मुक्तस्य तन्मनः ।।३४।।
सरूपोऽसौ मनोनाशो जीवन्मुक्तस्य विद्यते ।
अरूपस्तु मनोनाशो वैदेहीमुक्तिगो भवेत् ।।३५।।

The mind of a Jivan Mukta, which is freed from rebirth, is the dissolved mind with form. The dissolution of the mind without form takes place in the case of Videha Mukti. (34-35)

In Jivan Mukta there is still left a little trace of the mind because of which various functions of the body are performed. But in Videha Mukti there is no trace of the mind at all. In this state all the activities of the body cease completely.

सहस्राङ्कुरशाखात्मफलपल्लवशालिनः ।
अस्य संसारवृक्षस्य मनो मूलमिदं स्थितम् ।।३६।।

The mind is the root of this tree of Samsara (characterised by transmigratory existence) growing with thousands of sprouts, branches, leaves and fruits. (36)

संकल्प एव तन्मन्ये संकल्पोपशमेन तत् ।
शोषयाशु यथा शोषमेति संसारपादपः ।।३७।।

Volitions (desires) alone is known as the mind, by cessation of desires destroy this mind so that the tree of Samsara is destroyed. (37)

अस्य संसारवृक्षस्य सर्वोपद्रवदायिनः।
उपाय एक एवास्ति मनसः स्वस्य निग्रहे ।।३८।।

This tree of Samsara which produces all types of misfortunes (agitations) has only one cure, restraint of one's own mind. (38)

मनसोऽभ्युदयो नाशो मनोनाशो महोदयः ।
ज्ञमनो नाशमभ्येति मनोऽज्ञस्य हि श्रृङ्खला।।३९।।

Growth of the mind is a disaster (causing oblivion to Self-knowledge); its destruction is a great fortune. The mind of the knower (of the Self) is destroyed; for the ignorant it is truly his shackles. (39)

तावन्निशीव वेताला वल्गन्ति हृदि वसनाः ।
एकतत्वदृढाभ्यासाद्यावन्न विजितं मनः ।।४०।।

The desires continue to torment (literal meaning - excite) the heart like midnight-ghosts till the mind is vanquished through firm practice of (meditation upon) the unifying principle (of Self). (40)

प्रक्षीणचित्तदर्पस्य निगृहीतेन्द्रियद्विषः ।
पद्मिन्य इव हेमन्ते क्षीयन्ते भोगवासनाः ।।४१।।

The one who has eliminated the mental pride and defeated the enemy like senses, his desires for enjoyments die down like the lotus plant in winter. (41)

Methods of Mind Control:

हस्तं हस्तेन संपीड्य दन्तैर्दन्तान् विचूर्ण्य च ।
अङ्गान्यङ्गैः समाक्रम्य जयेदादौ स्वकं मनः ।।४२।।

Placing the hand over the other hand, holding teeth (of upper jaw) over the teeth (of lower jaw) and resting one limb (viz. feet) over the other limb (feet) one should conquer one's own mind (through this firm posture of the body). (42)

उपविश्योपविश्यैकां चित्तकेन मुहुर्मुहुः ।
न शक्यते मनो जेतुं विना युक्तिमनिन्दिताम् ।।४३।।
अङ्कुशेन विना मत्तो यथा दुष्टमङ्गजः ।

Just as the unruly elephant cannot be controlled without a goad so also the practice of one-pointed attention through repeated sittings (in a firm posture) cannot subdue the mind without the help of flawless reasoning. (43-44)

People follow various disciplines to control the mind. These practices are only ancillary in the nature. The mind can be controlled only by discriminating the real from the unreal through flawless reasoning. Various practices of Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga and Hatha Yoga are useful only if the mind gives up all other desires of the seen and unseen worlds. Therefore now follows the primary methods of mind control.

अध्यात्मविद्याऽधिगमः साधुसंगतिरेव च ।।४४।।
वासनासंपरित्यागः प्राणस्पन्दनिरोधनम् ।
एतास्ता युक्तयः पुष्टाः सन्ति चित्तजये किल ।।४५।।

Study (awakening) of spiritual knowledge, association with pious people, complete renunciation of desires, and control of pulsation of life force – these are the perfect methods to control the mind. (44-45)

सतीषु युक्तिष्वेतासु हठान्नियमयन्ति ये ।
चेतसो दीपमुत्सृज्य विचिन्वन्ति तमोऽञ्जनैः ।।४६।।

Those who give up these easy methods and follow Hath yoga techniques to control the mind, they (are like those who) throw away the lamp and apply ointment to their eyes to dispel the darkness. (46)

विमूढाः कर्तुमुद्युक्ता ये हठाच्चेतसो जयम् ।
ते निबध्नन्ति नागेन्द्रमुन्मत्तं बिसतन्तुभिः ।।४७।।

Those ignorant people who want to conquer the mind by force, they (are like those who) want to bind the frenzied elephant with lotus-fiber. (47)

द्वे बीजे चित्तवृक्षस्य वृत्तिव्रततिधारिणः ।
एकं प्राणपरिस्पन्दो द्वितीयं दृढभावना ।।४८।।

There are two seeds for the tree of the mind enduring the agitations of thoughts - one is pulsation of Praana (vital energy) and the second is intense desire. (48)

Meditation and Samadhi:

सा हि सर्वगता संवित् प्राणस्पन्देन चाल्यते ।
चित्तैकाग्र्यद्यतो ज्ञानमुक्तं समुपजायते ।।४९।।
तत्साधनमथो ध्यानं यथावदुपदिश्यते ।

All pervasive comprehensive consciousness moves through the pulsation of Praana. Aforesaid knowledge arises by means of concentrated mind. Therefore, meditation as a means of it (knowledge) is being duly prescribed. (49-50)

विलाप्य विकृतिं कृत्स्नां संभवव्यत्ययक्रमात् ।
परिशिष्टं च चिन्मात्रं चिदानन्दं विचिन्तय ।।५०।।

Dissolving modifications of entire creation in the reverse order (to their source through meditation), think of the ultimate (literal meaning remaining) and pure Being, Awareness and Bliss. (50)

अपानेऽस्तंगते प्राणो यावन्नाभ्युदितो हृदि ।
तावत् सा कुम्भकावस्था योगिभिर्याऽनुभूयते ।।५१।।

The Apaana Vayu has diminished until the Praana Vayu arises in the heart – this is the state of Kumbhaka (restraint of vital air) to that length which is experienced by the Yogis. (51)

बहिरस्तंगते प्राणे यावन्नापान उद् गतः ।
तावत्पूर्णां समावस्थां बहिष्ठं कुम्भकं विदुः ।।५२।।

From the time out-breath (Praana) disappears till in-breath (Apaana) arises, that state of complete equality is known as outward Kumbhaka. (52)

ब्रह्माकारमनोवृत्तिप्रवाहोऽहंकृतिं विना ।
संप्रज्ञातसमाधिः स्याद्ध्यानाभ्यासप्रकर्षतः ।।५३।।

That state of mental state suffused with the form (thought) of Brahman without ego, is the Samprajnata Samadhi which results from the superior practice of meditation. (53)

When all the thoughts are centered on the Self alone and all perceptions of non-Self are completely eliminated from the mind then it is said to be in the state of Samprajnata Samadhi. In this conscious Samadhi all the mental modifications (mind-stuff) take the form of the bliss of the Self. Contemplation, concentration and meditation are considered as internal means to this Samprajnata Samadhi.

प्रशान्तवृत्तिकं चित्तं परमानन्ददायकम् ।
असंप्रज्ञातनामाऽयं समाधिर्योगिनां प्रिय ।।५४।।

When all the mental transformations (modifications) cease giving rise to supreme bliss – this (state) is known as Asamprajnata Samadhi which is loved by the Yogis. (54)

In Asamprajnata Samadhi all mental modifications (thoughts) are completely eliminated. In this state, the mind, because of its inherent nature, assuming the form of Self-knowledge, revels in eternal bliss. This is a state of super-conscious Samadhi wherein the mind being free from all desires becomes blissful. In Asamprajnata Samadhi bliss is not in the form of mental modifications. Contemplation, concentration and meditation become the external means to this Samadhi since no means are ever necessary to attain that blissful state which is already inherent in our true nature.

प्रभाशून्यं मनःशून्यं बुद्धिशून्यं चिदात्मकम् ।
अतद्व्यावृत्तिरूपोऽसौ समाधिर्मुनिभावितः ।।५५।।

This super-conscious Samadhi, which is of the nature of the spirit, being devoid of the light (as ego of waking state), mind (as in

dreaming state) and intellect (as in causal state) and free from transformations (of Chitta), delights the sages. (55)

ऊर्ध्वपूर्णमध:पूर्णं मध्यपूर्णं शिवात्मकम् ।
साक्षाद्विधिमुखो ह्येष समाधिः पारमार्थिकः ।।५६।।

The super-conscious Samadhi is the ultimate reality being full above, full below and full in the middle and (it) is the essence of auspiciousness; this is the opinion of the Lord Brahma himself. (56)

The ultimate reality should not be perceived as void or negation of all sufferings as some schools of thought believe. This ultimate reality is to be perceived as full and a positive state of bliss. The Isavasya Upanishad also describes this ultimate reality as full (Poorna).

Desire conceals the real nature:

दृढभावनया त्यक्तपूर्वापरविचारणम् ।
यदादानं पदार्थस्य वासना सा प्रकीर्तिता ।।५७।।

Vasana (desire) is described as intense thought (longing) for an object without considering its prior and posterior effect. (57)

भावितं तीव्रसंवेगादात्मना यत्तदेव सः ।
भवत्याशु कपिश्रेष्ठ विगतेतरवासनः ।।५८।।

O superior most among the monkeys, whatever he thinks himself to be with intense thought (longing), he instantly becomes that, forgetting (all other) good impressions. (58)

तादृग्रूपो हि पुरुषो वासनाविवशीकृतः ।
संपश्यति यदैवैतत् सद्वस्त्विति विमुह्यति ।।५९।।

Such a person, completely enslaved by the impressions (desires), whatever he perceives he takes it to be real under infatuation. (59)

वासनावेगवैचित्र्यात् स्वरुपं न जहाति तत् ।
भ्रान्तं पश्यति दुर्दृष्टिः सर्वं मदवशादिव ।।६०।।

The mind stupefied under the impulse of desires, does not perceive the real nature of things. It perceives everything with a wrong vision like a man does under the influence of an intoxicant. (60)

वासना द्विविधा प्रोक्ता शुद्धा च मलिना तथा ।
मलिना जन्महेतुः स्याच्छुद्धा जन्मविनाशिनी ।।६१।।

The Vasana (desire) is said to be of two kinds, pure and impure; the impure one causes birth and the pure one destroys birth. (61)

अज्ञानसुघनाकारा घनाहंकारशालिनी ।
पुनर्जन्मकरी प्रोक्ता मलिना वासना बुधैः ।।६२।।

Wise Ones say that the impure Vasana is of the nature of deep (dense) ignorance and vehement ego which causes rebirth. (62)

Attachment and ego are the two causes of rebirth. Attachment arises because of deep rooted ignorance which gives undue importance to a form forgetting the real soul-personality behind the form. Ego arises due to deep rooted selfishness that refuses to see the unifying principle of creation and thus creates discord and division in the mind.

पुनर्जन्माङ् कुरं त्यक्तवा स्थितिः संभृष्टबीजवत् ।
बहुशास्त्रकथाकन्थारोमन्थेन वृथैव किम् ।
अन्वेष्टव्यं प्रयत्नेन मारुते ज्योतिरान्तरम् ।।६३।।

That state (of pure Vasana) gives freedom from rebirth like a baked seed, which is incapable of sprouting again. What purpose is served by the futile repetition of collected texts of many scriptures as in the case of a patched garment? O Maruthi, discover (realise) this inner light through practice. (63)

दर्शनादर्शने हित्वा स्वयं केवलरूपतः ।
यस्तिष्ठति स कपिशा तु ब्रह्म न ब्रह्मवित् स्वयम् ।।६४।।

The one who remains (absorbed) in one's own form alone after giving up perception and non-perception, O Lord of monkeys, is Brahman oneself and not only a knower of Brahman. (64)

Lord Rama says that those noble souls who abide in the Self according to the teachings of the Upanishads are not mere knowers of Brahman but Brahman themselves. A person becomes introvert when all impressions (Vasanas) are effaced from the mind. Such a person after knowing Brahman verily becomes Brahman. The Mundaka Upanishad (III.2.9) also says: "*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati*" - the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. However, the mind of a person, who has not yet destroyed all Vasanas, remains extrovert and does not abide in the Self. Such a person even though well versed in the knowledge of the Vedas and Sastras, does not attain the status of Brahman. Therefore follows the next verse.

अधीत्य चतुरो वेदान् सर्वशास्त्रण्यनेकशः ।
ब्रह्मतत्वं न जानाति दर्वी पाकरसं यथा ।।६५।।

One may not know the essence of Brahman even after studying the four Vedas and all the Sastras many times just like a ladle that does not know the taste of the food. (65)

Detachment and Desirelessness:

स्वदेहाशुचिगन्धेन न विरज्येत यः पुमान् ।
विरागकारणं तस्य किमन्यदुपदिश्यते ।।६६।।

If a person is not disgusted with the foul smell emanating from one's own body, what other cause of detachment can be prescribed (to him)? (66)

An Ignorant person wants to covet a faultless body. But the above verse says that the body is very impure by its nature. Therefore, a wise person should develop disgust for this body. This is the right method for developing detachment.

अत्यन्तमलिनो देहो देही चात्यन्तनिर्मलः ।
उभयोरन्तरं ज्ञात्वा कस्य शौचं विधीयते ।।६७।।

The body is very impure and the indweller (embodied soul) is very pure. When this difference is known, for whom should purification be prescribed? (67)

The idea is that the body being always impure can never be purified through the rites prescribed in the Vedas. While, the soul being ever pure does not require any purificatory rite. The Vedas prescribe rites and sacrifices for the purification of mental and sensory perceptions. This is still the Pravritti Marga (extrovert path) that seeks enjoyment in heaven. But the Vedanta lays more emphasis on detachment from the sense objects for the purity of mind. The path shown by the Vedanta is the Nivritti Marga (introvert path) leading to immortality. Those who have developed detachment need not follow the Vedic injunctions. The next few verses describe about the necessity of renunciation of desires for mental tranquility.

बद्धो हि वासनाबद्धो मोक्षः स्याद्वासनाक्षयः ।
वासनास्त्वं परित्यज्य मोक्षार्थित्वमपि त्यज ।।६८।।

Bondage is verily the bonds of desire. Liberation is its destruction. Renouncing the desires, you must give up even the desire for liberation. (68)

God is not the cause of bondage and liberation. Liberation ensues from the state of desirelessness. By renouncing desires one becomes one's own redeemer.

मानसीर्वासनाः पूर्वं त्यक्त्वा विषयवासनाः ।
मैत्र्यादिवासनानाम्नीर्गृहाणामलवासनाः ।।६९।।

Renouncing first the desires of the sense objects then (give up even) the mental desires (Loka Vasana, Sastra Vasana and Deha Vasana), inculcate good (pure) impressions through the thoughts of oneness (belongingness) and the rest. (69)

ता अप्यतः परित्यज्य ताभिर्व्यवहरन्नापि ।
अन्तः शान्तसमस्तेहो भव चिन्मात्रवासनः ।।७०।।

Although practicing them (externally) renounce these also inwardly and be calm and tranquil (mentally) desiring only knowledge of the Self. (70)

तामप्यथ परित्यज्य मनोबुद्धिसमन्विताम् ।
शेषस्थिरसमाधानो मयि त्वं भव मारुते ।।७१।।

Giving up even that (the desire for knowledge) along with the mind and intellect, abide in that what remains, O Maruti, you become that, my very Self. (71)

The previous five verses prescribe the renunciation of desires for bringing about mental transformation. When the mind becomes tranquil through the effacement of all desires, it becomes one with the Self. The entire philosophy behind the mental transformation is that the mind becomes powerful and active through the desires of sense objects (like wife, sons, wealth, etc.) and mental desires (like health, beauty, name, fame, scholarship, etc.). The Amritbindu Upanishad (1) also says that the mind bereft of desires is rendered pure. By giving up both pure and impure Vasanas, the mind merges in the Self alone. The above five verses show the efficacy of renunciation of desires for the attainment of liberation. Desirelessness and detachment are the crux of the Vedanta philosophy for attaining liberation.

अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूपमव्ययं तथाऽरसं नित्यमगन्धवच्च यत् ।
अनामगोत्रं मम रूपमीदृशं भजस्व नित्यं पवनात्मजार्तिहम् ।।७२।।

O son of Vayu, always contemplate on my form as devoid of sound, touch, form, taste and smell; of indestructible and eternal nature; without name and lineage as the destroyer of sorrow. (72)

दृशिस्वरूपं गगनोपमं परं सकृद्विभातं त्वजमेकमक्षरम् ।
अलेपकं सर्वगतं यदद्वयं तदेव चाहं सकलं विमुक्त ॐ ।।७३।।

I am the supreme witnessing consciousness (eternal seer), all-pervasive like the sky, ever manifested, unborn, one only, imperishable, stainless and non-dual. I am, therefore, omnipresent and ever-free. (73)

दृशिस्तु शुद्धोऽहमविक्रियात्मको न मेऽस्ति कश्चिद्विषयः स्वभावतः ।
पुरस्तिरश्चोर्ध्वमधश्च सर्वतः सुपूर्णभूमाऽहमितीह भावय ।।७४।।

I am pure and changeless consciousness; I am by nature devoid of worldly objects (or sensual pleasure). I am all- pervasive Brahman in front, across, above, below and all other directions, thus indeed should be perceived (realised).

अजोऽमरश्चैव तथाऽजरोऽमृतः स्वयंप्रभः सर्वगतोऽहमव्ययः ।
न कारणं कार्यमतीत्य निर्मलः सदैव तृप्तोऽहमितीह भावय ।।७५।।

I am birthless, deathless, ageless, immortal, self-luminous, all-pervasive, undecaying, beyond cause or effect and ever contented, thus indeed should be perceived. (75)

जीवन्मुक्तपदं त्यक्तवा स्वदेहे कालसात्कृते ।
विशत्यदेहमुक्तत्वं पवनोऽस्पन्दतामिव ।।७६।।

Giving up the state of Jivan Mukti on dissolution of the body (made of desires) he enters the state of Videha Mukti just as wind becomes motionless. (76)

It is mentioned in this Upanishad that Kaivalya Mukti is attained through knowledge alone. Purusha Suktam says that knowing Him one becomes immortal in this body (तमेवं विद्वानमृत इह भवति). Here Mukti does not imply liberation after dissolution of the present gross body or subtle body. In the state of Jivan Mukti, Prarabdha Karmas are not totally destroyed. A Jivan Mukta is sometimes impelled by Prarabdha Karma. However, when all latent impressions are obliterated and the mind is dissolved, there arises the supreme knowledge of Brahman. The result of this knowledge is complete effacement of those causes which can give rise to a future body. This is the state of Videha Mukti where a future body (either gross or subtle) is totally non-existent. The Brahma Sutra (1.1.4 & 4.1.13) makes it very clear that Videha Mukti is simultaneously attained with the awakening of knowledge. Thus a person, who has obliterated all impressions and dissolved the mind, attains Videha Mukti through knowledge because there is nothing left that can cause future birth. This knowledge removes all obstacles to liberation. However, the present body (both subtle and gross) is still maintained because of Prarabdha. But this Prarabdha does not create any obstacle in liberation as it creates obstacle in the case of an ignorant person. This Prarabdha is stated in order to elucidate to ignorant people who question as to how the present body of the liberated soul is still maintained.

तदेतदृचाभ्युक्तम् -
The following verse also states this very fact:

तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः । दिवीव चक्षुराततम् ।।
तद्विप्रासो विपन्यवो जागृवांसः समिन्धते । विष्णोर्यत्परमं पदम् ।। ७७ ।।
ॐ सत्यमित्युपनिषत् ।।

That supreme abode of Vishnu (all-pervasive Self) which the wise seers (knowers of Brahman) ever behold (within) through an integral vision (knowledge of identity of Self with Brahman) encompassing the heaven (beyond objective world). The initiated (pure) and awakened ones with all their worldly desires destroyed, keep that (Self-knowledge) kindled. Strive for the supreme state of Vishnu (Self or Brahman). (77)

Om (fourth state of Turiya) is Truth.
This is the Upanishad.

The Upanishads say in categorical terms that all-pervasive Self alone is the supreme abode. This Self alone is imperishable, unborn, unchanging, and undissolved. The highest heaven called Brahmaloka is also not eternal. It is created, sustained and dissolved at the end of each cycle of creation. The purpose of life is not the attainment of heaven but the realisation of the Self. Therefore, the wise seers behold this Self alone through their integral vision which encompasses even the highest heaven.

This unity and oneness of the Self with everything is the supreme vision of the Vedas. Duality is not the highest Truth. Non-duality alone is the highest Truth. The culmination of Vedanta philosophy is the realisation of everything as the Self. The Mandukya Upanishad (2) says, "सर्वं ह्येतद् ब्रह्म – All this is verily Brahman." The Chandogya Upanishad (VII.25.2) says, "आत्मैवेदं सर्वम् – Self indeed is all this." The Svetasvatara Upanishad (VI.11) says, "एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः - Only one God is hidden in all beings." The Katha Upanishad (II.ii.12) says, "एको वशी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा - There is only one Being who is the inner ruler and the inner Self of all." No intellectual can ever condemn this grand integrated view of the Vedas on practical ground. This magnificent vision is a secure fortress impregnable to logicians. Sage Veda Vyasa in his Brahma Sutra (II.i.1-12) says that all those philosophies which are in conflict with this view of the Vedas should be rejected as they are inconclusive.

In conclusion, this Upanishad mentions about an absolute principle that is uncreated and undestroyed, neither having any cause nor effect. Escape from the cycles of birth and death is possible only because this absolute principle exists. If we know this principle we attain absolute salvation or Kaivalya Mukti. Kaivalya Mukti consists of Jivan Mukti as well as Videha Mukti. Samadhi, resulting from effacement of desires and dissolution of the mind, is the direct means to this knowledge of the absolute principle. There is no other means like Upasana (worship), Yoga, Sankhya, Mimansa, etc. to this Kaivalya Mukti. Other means like worship, chanting, service, etc. though useful at a certain stage of Sadhana, are ineffective in the attainment of this supreme state. When all actions are destroyed through knowledge of the Self, a person attains liberation in this very body. The Svetasvattara Upanishad (1.1.8) also says that by knowing God one is freed from all bondages. (ज्ञात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः). Those who by giving up this knowledge, strive for Yogic powers and for the position of other gods, are not satisfied with their own Self being swayed by the destiny. No other state can ever be superior to Kaivalya Mukti.

ॐ तत् सत्

अध्यात्मोपनिषत्
(ADHYATMA UPANISHAD)*

*The Upanishad dealing with spiritual knowledge

अध्यात्मोपनिषत्

ADHYATMOPANISHAD

This Upanishad, ranking 73 among the total 108 Upanishads, forms a part of Sukla-Yajurveda. As the name suggests, this Upanishad treats spiritual knowledge in a very rational and lucid manner emphasising the necessity of diligent self-effort coupled with discrimination for attaining non-dual knowledge. This Upanishad disagrees with the view that one cannot work out one's own salvation with independent self-effort and has to rely on some external personal God for attaining immortality. This Upanishad admits no dualistic philosophy and sets aside all such doctrines that are opposed to the Non-dual knowledge of Brahman. This Brahma Vidya culminates in Jivan Mukti, liberation-in-life. The earnest seeker of liberation will find in this Upanishad, the boldness and conviction of a true adventurous spirit.

Shanti Mantra:

ॐ
ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ।।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।।

Om, That (absolute unconditioned Brahman) is infinite, and this (conditioned Brahman or universe) is infinite. The infinite (universe) proceeds from the infinite (Brahman). (Then), realising the infinitude of the infinite (universe), it remains as the infinite (Brahman) alone.
Om ! Peace! Peace! Peace!

Repudiation of super-imposition:

अहं ममेति यो भावो देहाक्षादावनात्मनि ।
अध्यासोऽयं निरस्तव्यो विदुषा ब्रह्मनिष्ठया ।।१।।

The thought, "I am and mine are the body, the senses, etc." is non-self. The wise man should repudiate this superimposition (on the Self) through steadfast devotion to Brahman. (1)

Spirituality is beyond the senses. One, who cannot go beyond the body

and senses, is disqualified for a spiritual life. Identification with the body and senses signifies a fall of our consciousness. This down fall should be avoided by the wise through Brahmanistha, steadfast devotion to Brahman.

ज्ञात्वा स्वं प्रत्यगात्मनं बुद्धितद् वृत्तिसाक्षिणम् ।
सोऽहमित्येव तद्वृत्या स्वान्यत्रात्ममतिं त्यजेत् ।।२।।

Knowing one's own Self to be the witness of the intellect and its modifications, identifying the 'I' with That (Self), give up the (false) impression of Self being other than That (witness state). (2)

Having repudiated the false superimposition of the body and senses on the Self, now the repudiation of various modifications of the mind and intellect is taken up. The intellect perceives all the modifications of the mind in the waking and dreaming states but becomes latent in the deep sleep state. Self is the witness of the intellect and never ceases to exist even during the deep sleep state. The intellect is not the proper instrument to fathom the Self. Therefore follows the injunction for seekers of the knowledge of the supreme spirit to reject the identity with this intellect.

लोकानुवर्तनं त्यक्त्वा त्यक्त्वा देहानुवर्तनम् ।
शास्त्रानुवर्तनं त्यक्त्वा स्वाध्यासापनयं कुरु ।।३।।

Giving up the way of the world (i.e. worldly life), rejecting the cravings of the body and not confining one self to the injunctions of the Sastras (scriptures that do not deal with Self-knowledge), do away the superimposition on Self. (3)

Impure Vasanas (innate impulses) produce results that are opposed to Self-Knowledge. These are said to be of three kinds, viz. Loka Vasana, Sastra Vasana and Deha Vasana. The resolve to lead such a life that will win him people's praises and not censure is called the desire for the world. Worldly people exert themselves for the sake of name, fame and status in society. It is said to be impure because it binds a person with many family and social obligations. People with such desires do not make any attempt to know their own Self but go by ephemeral and transient worldly goals which cause bondage for the soul. Wise people

do not tread on the path of the world. Rising above the world, wise people avoid recognition from the world.

The desire for learning is related to the study of scriptures, performance of rituals and knowledge of many disciplines. Attached to such secular and religious learning, people identify themselves with profession, lineage, clan, caste, community, and fail to realise the goal of life. Ritualists go on worshiping many Gods and Goddesses but they do not know their own Selves. Scholars, well versed in the knowledge of science and technology, consider themselves superior to those who have a religious inclination. People who are attached to rituals and charity consider Self-knowledge as unnecessary and quote various scriptures to justify their hypothesis. It is said to be an impure desire since it is the cause of pride resulting in false notions of superiority and inferiority. Deluded people who delight in such learning fall again and again into old age and death.

Desire for the body arises because people want to covet a faultless body. Musicians struggle hard to acquire a melodious voice. Teachers strive to acquire good skills of oration. People use various cosmetics to acquire beauty. Ritualists purify the body by sprinkling and sipping water and the like. This type of Vasana is impure because it signifies false identification of the Self with the body. Those confounded fools, who are in love with this body which is but a conglomerate of flesh, bones, blood, muscle, etc., will also be fond of hell.

Wise seers of Truth have thus warned us against pursuing these three types of desires. These three desires though may appear acceptable to indiscriminating people are said to be obstacles for the wise in the attainment of Self-knowledge.

Rejection of Non-Self and Reflection on Self:

स्वात्मन्येव सदा स्थित्या मनो नश्यति योगिनः ।
युक्त्या श्रुत्या स्वानुभूत्या ज्ञात्वा सार्वात्म्यमात्मनः ।।४।।

Knowing, through reasoning, scriptures and one's own experience, that there is (only) one Self in all beings, the mind of the Yogin becomes extinct as it constantly dwells in Self alone. (4)

Having set aside the false superimposition on the Self, now follows the injunction for the rejection of non-Self and reflection on the Self. The Katha Upanishad (II.ii.11) says: "The Self, that is one alone in all beings, is not tainted by the sorrows of the world (since) It is transcendental". Reflecting thus on the nature of Atman by reasoning in conformity with Shruti, the Yogi conquers the mind. A Seeker of spiritual knowledge should not pay heed to the illusory advice of anyone and should rely upon his own experiences. Indiscriminative people with a defective vision perceive diversities and entertain various desires on the pretext of duty. Those who are complacent by the Doctrine of Karma alone, never attain the dissolution of the mind (Mano-Nasha) as they are preoccupied with various duties. One, who makes no effort for dissolution of mind, never attains spiritual knowledge. There are two ways to dissolve the mind, one through Yoga and other through Knowledge. This Upanishad deals with the discriminative knowledge of Self and non-Self for attaining "Mano-Nasha".

निद्राया लोकवार्तायाः शब्दादेरात्मविस्मृतेः ।
कचिन्नावसरं दत्वा चिन्तयात्मानमात्मनि ।।५।।

Without giving the slightest chance to Self-oblivion on account of sleep, gossip on secular matters, or sense objects (like music, etc.), reflect on the Self in thy mind. (5)

Those who want to reflect on the Self for extinction of the mind should make every effort to drive away the laziness and forgetfulness through a disciplined life. They should have only moderate sleep and avoid indulging in secular matters, which distract the mind from one pointed attention. Constantly reflecting on the Self in the mind through one pointed attention is the chief duty of seekers of spiritual knowledge.

मातापित्रोर्मलोद्भूतं मलमांसमयं वपुः ।
त्यक्त्वा चण्डालवद्दूरं ब्रह्मीभूय कृती भव ।।६।।

Shunning from far away like an outcast, this body, which is the offspring of parental impurities and itself consists of flesh and foul matter, be thou Brahman and attain fulfillment (in thy life). (6)

One, who is not disgusted with the body, which is very impure in

nature, does not attain spiritual fulfillment in life like an outcast. This Sloka cautions those part time devotees of Gods who vehemently oppose any effort to renounce family obligations. Those who entertain worldly desires like family life etc., come under the commands of scriptures that keep only worldly welfare in view. The notion that one is born to so and so and so, and so are my parents, is the result of spiritual ignorance. Laghu Yoga Vasistha (20.42) also says thus: "The conviction, O Rama, that 'I am built from head to foot by my father and mother' is due to a wrong notion and leads to bondage". Wise seekers of spiritual knowledge do not become slaves of worldly desires and reject all duties that are opposed to Self-contemplation.

घटाकाशं महाकाश इवात्मानं परात्मनि ।
विलाप्यखण्डभावेन तूष्णीं भव सदा मुने ।।७।।

Merge the finite soul in the Supreme Self, like the space enclosed by a jar in the infinite space, by means of (this) identity with infinite, be silent for ever, O sage ! (7)

स्वप्रकाशमधिष्ठानं स्वयंभूय सदात्मना ।
ब्रह्माण्डमपि पिण्डाण्डं त्यज्यतां मलभाण्डवत् ।।८।।

Thou being the true Self, the Self-existing Brahman, the Self-effulgent substratum of every thing, give up (the sense of reality of) the universe (macrocosm) and your body (microcosm), like a pot filled with filth. (8)

Negation of the reality of the universe and the body and affirmation of the reality of Brahman is the true sign of spiritual knowledge. Those, who consider this universe and body as real, get entangled in mundane matters and thus they are deprived of Self-knowledge. Katha Upanishad also says "there is nothing other than the Atman as everything shines by the light of this Atman." (Katha Up. II.ii.15) Applying reason in conformance with such Shruti which reveals that the sub-stratum of everything is Brahman, one can eliminate the superimposition of microcosm and macrocosm. Seekers of knowledge of the supreme spirit always live with a firm conviction that nothing has ever been created and nothing has ever been dissolved and Brahman alone exists. Thus they ceaselessly reflect on Brahman alone.

चिदात्मनि सदानन्दे देहरूढामहंधियम् ।
निवेश्य लिङ्गमुत्सृज्य केवलो भव सर्वदा ।।९।।

Transferring the sense of 'I' now rooted in the body to the Atman, the Being-Awareness-Bliss absolute, discarding the (false identity with) subtle body, be thou ever universal absolute (one without second). (9)

One who goes beyond by discarding the objective (gross) and subjective (subtle) reality of the body as perceived by ego-centric senses, mind and intellect attains Kaivalyam (universal absolute).

यत्रैष जगदाभासो दर्पणान्तःपुरं यथा ।
तद्ब्रह्माहमिति ज्ञात्वा कृतकृत्यो भवानघ ।।१०।।

Where this reflection of the universe is like a city (reflected) in a mirror, realising that you are that Brahman, attain fulfillment in thy life, O sinless one! (10)

अहंकारग्रहान्मुक्तः स्वरूपमुपपद्यते ।
चन्द्रवद्विमलः पूणः सदानन्दः स्वयंप्रभः ।।११।।

He, who is freed from the grip of egoism, as the moon from the eclipse, attains his real nature and shines in his self effulgence (being) ever pure, infinite whole, (and) ever blissful. (11)

Effacement of innate impulses:

Having rejected the non-Self, now the effacement of latent innate impulses (Vasanas) is being delineated for the attainment of liberation.

क्रियानाशाद्भवेच्चिन्तानाशोऽस्माद्वासनाक्षयः ।
वासनाप्रक्षयो मोक्षः स जीवन्मुक्तिरिष्यते ।।१२।।

Cessation of (selfish) actions brings destruction of longing for sense-objects, which is followed by the annihilation of desires (Vasanas). The annulment of desires is liberation. This is considered as Jivan Mukti (liberation-in-life). (12)

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says "The self (which transmigrates) is

identified with desires alone. What he desires, he resolves; what he resolves, he works out; and what he works out, he attains" (Br. Up. 4.4.5). Bondage is due to desires and the mind is liberated when free from desires. Desire is the cause and selfish action is the effect. The above Sloka mentions that cause (desire) can be destroyed by subduing the effect (action). This demonstrates the necessity of *renunciation of actions* (including obligatory actions) for the attainment of liberation.

Under the influence of innate impulses, a man perceives the object through intense thought without considering its consequences. Subdued by desires, whatever a man sees he sees wrongly and fails to grasp the real nature of things. Completely enslaved by desires (Vasanas) he perceives everything to be real and his senses thus become extrovert in pursuit of objects. The next Sloka therefore now demonstrates the necessity of right perception through *Knowledge* for the annihilation of desires. Both renunciation and knowledge are necessary for liberation.

सर्वत्र सर्वतः सर्वब्रह्ममात्रावलोकनम् ।
सद्भावभावनादाढर्याद्वासनालयमश्नुते ।।१३।।

(The means to destroy the selfish action, longing for sense-object and desires is) to see everything, always everywhere, and in all respect, as Brahman and Brahman alone. Through strengthening the true resolve (of being one with Brahman), innate impulses are annihilated. (13)

Laghu Yoga Vasistha (16.45) also says thus: "Desires (Vasanas) are dissolved by discerning the Truth correctly. The desires being dissolved the mind is extinguished even as a lamp without oil."

प्रमादो ब्रह्मनिष्ठायां न कर्तव्यः कदाचन ।
प्रमादो मृत्युरित्याहुर्विद्यायां ब्रह्मवादिनः ।।१४।।

One should never be careless in one's steadfastness to Brahman. Seers of Brahman affirm that carelessness is death itself in regard to spiritual knowledge. (14)

The one, who does not contemplate on Brahman, invariably thinks of the sense world. The Lord in the Gita (2.62 & 63) says, "By thinking

of sense objects one develops attachment towards them. From attachment arises desire, and from desire, anger. From anger arises delusion; from delusion, perversion of memory. Due to perversion of memory, intellect perishes and with this one comes to utter ruin." Thus not contemplating on Brahman and thinking of sense objects is carelessness and it is compared with death for spiritual aspirants. Sage Sanat-Sujata in the *Udyogaparva* of the Mahabharata (41.4) also says that death results from delusion of the body which arises because of fall from one's own true nature. Eternal vigilance grants immortality.

यथाऽपकृष्टं शैवालं क्षणमात्रं न तिष्ठति ।
आवृणोति तथा माया प्राज्ञं वाऽपि पराङ्मुखम् ।।१५।।

As moss, even if cleared (from water), does not cease (to grow) for a moment, but covers it (water) again, so too Maya envelops even a wise man, if his senses are extrovert (averse to contemplation on the Self). (15)

There is no greater danger for aspirants than the carelessness in restraining the senses from going outward. All senses must be restrained in order to protect the discriminative knowledge that has arisen. "For even one of the roving senses, if the mind yields to it, carries away discrimination, as a gale carries away a ship on the waters" (Gita 2.67). The Lord in the Gita (2.68) has declared thus: "His wisdom is steady whose all senses have been withdrawn from their respective objects." There is no greater Sadhana than withdrawing the senses from their respective objects.

जीवतो यस्य कैवल्यं विदेहोऽपि स केवलः ।
समाधिनिष्ठतामेत्य निर्विकल्पो भवानघ ।।१६।।

One who dwells in absolute oneness (with Brahman) while alive continues to be in absolute oneness (with Brahman) even after the fall of the body. O sinless one, establishing yourself in Samadhi (super conscious state) ever remain devoid of any other thought. (16)

People adopt various means for liberation. "The wisest contemplate on the reality (of Brahman); the middling ones contemplate on scripture; low people think of Mantras; the lowest are deluded by (the efficacy) of the holy places." Maitreyopanisad (2.22)

Seer of this Upanishad avers the philosophy of non-dualism and vouch for Nirvikalpa Samadhi that leads to Sadyo Mukti (liberation here and now). Wise seekers resort to intense concentration on the Real by withdrawing from the objective and subjective worlds and attain the absolute. But followers of philosophy of dualism and qualified-non-dualism travel to Brahmaloka after the fall of the body and attain relative immortality. They do not attain Kaivalya Mukti (absolute liberation). Through non-dual knowledge alone Kaivalya Mukti is attained.

अज्ञानहृदयग्रन्थेर्निःशेषविलयस्तदा ।
समाधिनाऽविकल्पेन यदाऽद्वैतात्मदर्शनम् ।।१७।।

When the non-dual Atman is realised by means of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, then the heart's knot of ignorance is completely destroyed. (17)

Samadhi is the result of infinite religious austerities. There are some schools of thought who condemn Samadhi and advise seekers to engage in selfless worldly activities without desire. But this view is not true because through Samadhi alone all desires are destroyed. Some people argue that although Samadhi is superior to worldly activities yet if it is fraught with desires then it is inferior to desireless worldly activities. But there also arises no defect because such meditation with desire cannot be called Samadhi. If both, the man absorbed in Samadhi and the man engaged in worldly activities, are enlightened and desireless then also this Nirvikalpa Samadhi is superior because it protects Jivan Mukti by bringing about dissolution of mind and effacement of all desires. Without entering into argument about comparative merits and demerits of various paths, this Upanishad recommends Nirvikalpa Samadhi for the knowledge of the supreme spirit.

अत्रात्मत्वं दृढीकुर्वन्नहमादिषु संत्यजन् ।
उदासीनतया तेषु तिष्ठेद्घटपटादिवत् ।।१८।।

Firmly convinced of one's identity with This (super consciousness state) and rejecting (the identification with) egoism and the rest, one should remain indifferent to them as in the case of pot, cloth, etc. (no one identifies one self with a pot or a cloth). (18)

Exposition on Non-dual Self:

Having defended the efficacy of Nirvikalpa Samadhi for the final emancipation now commences the exposition on Non-dual Self as experienced by the teacher in Samadhi.

ब्रह्मादिस्तम्ब पर्यन्तं मृषामात्रा उपाधयः ।
ततः पूर्णं स्वमात्मानं पश्येदेकात्मना स्थितम् ।।१९।।

All the differentiating adjuncts from Brahma down to a clump of grass are unreal .Therefore one should realise one's own infinite Self as the absolute one (being not a relative entity like other gods). (19)

Brahma, the presiding deity of collective causal bodies, is considered as a very high state by the followers of dualistic philosophy. This is true in case of relative state. But when envisioned from the absolute state of Samadhi, this state including lordship over all the fourteen lower worlds appear to be unreal. Therefore the wise one who has developed intense Vairagya does not aspire for any relative state and constantly abides in the Self alone which is absolute.

स्वयं ब्रह्मा स्वयं विष्णुः स्वयमिन्द्रः स्वयं शिवः ।
स्वयं विश्वमिदं सर्वं स्वस्मादन्यन्न किंचन ।।२०।।

The Self itself is Brahma, the Self itself is Vishnu, the Self itself is Indra, the Self itself is Siva; the Self itself is this entire universe. There is nothing else other than the Self. (20)

Kaivalya Upanishad (10) also says, "Seeing the Atman in all beings, and all beings in the Atman, one attains the highest Brahman-not by any other means." The next Sloka further illustrates the imperative need to eliminate all other false appearances for attaining Brahman.

स्वात्मन्यारोपिताशेषाभासवस्तुनिरासतः।
स्वयमेव परं ब्रह्म पूर्णमद्वयमक्रियम् ।।२१।।

By the elimination of all impure objective appearances superimposed upon one's own Self, one remains as the supreme Brahman, the infinite, non-dual and actionless. (21)

Impurity is the result of the identification of the Self with finite objective appearances like the body, etc. When mind is gradually withdrawn from objective appearances in Samadhi, there remains nothing to think. Then the mind is rendered pure and attains identity with Brahman.

असत्कल्पो विकल्पोऽयं विश्वमित्येकवस्तुनि ।
निर्विकारे निराकारे निर्विशेषे भिदा कुतः ।।२२।।

The imagination of the universe in the one Entity (Brahman) is a Asatkalpa (mere appearance but not real, as in the case of a mirage). Where can be any diversity in That which is changeless, formless, and qualityless ? (22)

Through constant practice of Samadhi all perceptions vanish from the mind and it abides in the formless reality. In the state of duality no view can be said to be conclusive in itself because it will only be partial view but reality perceived in the state of non-duality is conclusive and final. "The ultimate reality is formless alone." (Brahma Sutra III.ii.14) It is absurd to think of the phenomenal world in that non-dual state. It is Asat (non-existent) like water in mirage.

द्रष्टृदर्शनदृश्यादिभावशून्ये निरामये ।
कल्पार्णव इवात्यन्तं परिपूर्णे चिदात्मनि ।।२३।।

(In the one Entity) devoid of distinctions of seer, seeing and seen and free from all sufferings, in the absolutely full (all-pervasive), spiritual, Self, like the ocean at the time of cosmic deluge (where can there be any diversity)? (23)

तेजसीव तमो यत्र विलीनं भ्रान्तिकारणम् ।
अद्वितीये परे तत्वे निर्विशेषे भिदा कुतः ।।२४।।

Where can there be any diversity when the ignorance which is the cause of delusion is dissolved like darkness in light, in the Supreme Reality, the one without a second, and qualityless (absolute)? (24)

एकात्मके परे तत्वे भेदकर्ता कथं वसेत ।
सुषुप्तौ सुखमात्रायां भेदः केनावलोकितः ।।२५।।

In this Supreme Reality which is one and homogeneous, how can the agent of difference exist? In the state of profound sleep (dreamless sleep) characterised by pure bliss who has perceived difference? (25)

चित्तमूलो विकल्पोऽयं चित्ताभावे न कश्चन ।
अतश्चित्तं समाधेहि प्रत्यग्रूपे परात्मनि ।।२६।।

The mind is the source of this sense of difference (apparent universe); when the mind ceases to exist, there is none. Therefore merge the mind by concentrating it on the innermost Supreme Self. (26)

अखण्डानन्दमात्मानं विज्ञाय स्वस्वरूपतः ।
बहिरन्तः सदानन्दरसास्वादनमात्मनि ।।२७।।

Realising the blissful infinite Atman as his real nature, he experiences eternal bliss in his mind, internally as well as externally. (27)

Result of Self-knowledge:

वैराग्यस्य फलं बोधो बोधस्योपरतिः फलम् ।
स्वानन्दानुभवाच्छान्तिरेषैवोपरतेः फलम् ।।२८।।

The result of detachment is knowledge; that of knowledge is withdrawal from sense pleasures; which leads to the experience of bliss of the Self (and) from this follows peace. (28)

The pre-requisite qualifications for acquiring spiritual knowledge are said to be four, viz. Vairagya (Renunciation), Viveka (discriminative knowledge), Mumukshatwam (longing for liberation) and Sadsampada (six virtues like Sama, Dama, Uparati, etc.). This Upanishad delineates a cause and effect relationship between Vairagya, Viveka and Uparati (abstinence). If the withdrawal of the mind from sense object is lacking then it must be concluded that the mind has not yet acquired firm knowledge and the Vairagya is still incomplete. Though Uparati (abstinence) is said to be a pre-requisite qualification, here it is said to be the result of knowledge which is of a superior state than in the preliminary state. Without discriminative knowledge it is impossible to attain abstinence even through Yoga. In this Sloka it is made quite clear that the real characteristic of spiritual knowledge is complete

withdrawal from sense pleasures and cessation of all activities aimed to acquire them. One, who indulges in sense pleasure and still claims to possess spiritual knowledge is a hypocrite and fallen from spiritual grace. The Lord in the Gita also says "On seeing the Supreme, his taste too ceases". Then the desire for sense objects does not exist even as a tendency and one attains complete Vairagya.

यद्युत्तरोत्तराभावे पूर्वपूर्वं तु निष्फलम् ।
निवृतिः परमा तृप्तिरानन्दोऽनुपमः स्वतः ।।२९।।

If the succeeding stages are absent, it means that the preceding stages have been infructuous. The natural outcome (if they are followed in the right order) is withdrawal from the objective world, absolute satisfaction and incomparable bliss. (29)

Method of Spiritual Knowledge:

The teacher now imparts the Mantra of "Tat Twam Asi" to the disciple and exhorts him to visualise (Nididhyasanam) the Self after listening (Shravanam) and continuous pondering (Mananam) over the meaning of this Mantra. This is the method of imparting knowledge to a disciple. If practiced by a qualified disciple as per the instructions of the teacher, it leads to Samadhi. Direct knowledge is attained in Samadhi.

मायोपाधिर्जगद्योनिः सर्वज्ञत्वादिलक्षणः ।
पारोक्ष्यशबलः सत्याद्यात्मकस्तत्पदाभिधः ।।३०।।

He, who has Maya (creative power) as His adjunct, the cause of the world, characterised by omniscience and other, transcendental power, and fundamental Truth and so forth, is denoted by the word 'Tat'. (30)

आलम्बनतया भाति योऽस्मत्प्रत्ययशब्दयोः ।
अन्तःकरणसंभिन्नबोधः स त्वंपदाभिधः ।।३१।।

That, which shines forth as the content of word 'I' and elucidated as the inner organs of cognition, is denoted by the world 'Tvam'. (31)

मायाऽविद्ये विहायैव उपाधी परजीवयोः ।
अखण्डं सच्चिदानन्दं परं ब्रह्म विलक्ष्यते ।।३२।।

Only by the negation of Maya (creative power) and Avidya (nescience), the adjuncts of God and Jiva respectively, that the Brahman who is undifferentiated Being-Awareness and Bliss, is visualised. (32)

Maya is that creative power due to which absolute Brahman (Nirguna Brahman) appears as Iswara or Causal Brahman (Saguna Brahman). He is said to be the Lord of Maya and from a relative standpoint he is considered to be the highest. But the seeker who identifies himself with causal Brahman is still identified with the relative universe and not with the absolute. Because of Avidya, absolute Brahman appears as Jiva (individual soul) of limited knowledge. The basis of both Jiva and Iswara is absolute Brahman. One should reject both Maya and Avidya to arrive at the absolute, immutable and imperishable Brahman.

The next two Slokas delineate the process of Shravanam, Mananam and Nididhyasanam for acquiring spiritual knowledge.

इत्थं वाक्यैस्तदर्थानुसंधानं श्रवणं भवेत् ।
युक्त्या संभावितत्वनुसंधानं मननं तु तत् ।।३३।।

Interpreting thus by means of sentences is 'Listening' (Shravanam) while ascertaining its essential import through reasoning is (defined as) 'Recapitulating' (Mananam). (33)

ताभ्यां निर्विचिकित्सेऽर्थे चेतसः स्थापितस्य तत् ।
एकतानत्वमेतद्धि निदिध्यासनमुच्यते ।।३४।।

Fixing the mind with one pointed attention on the essential meaning after resolving all the doubts through listening and recapitulating, is said to be 'Meditation' (Nididhyasanam). (34)

ध्यातृध्याने परित्यज्य क्रमाद्ध्येयैकगोचरम् ।
निवातदीपवच्चित्तं समाधिरभिधीयते ।।३५।।

When the mind having given up the duality of meditator and meditation gradually gets absorbed in the object of meditation, (unwavering) like a flame in a windless spot, it is said to be in Samadhi. (35)

वृत्तयस्तु तदानीमप्यज्ञाता आत्मगोचराः ।
स्मरणादनुमीयन्ते व्युत्थितस्य समुत्थिताः ।।३६।।

In that state (of Samadhi), modifications of the mind are dissolved in the Self itself and are not recognised; they appear as a thing of the past (non-existent) after arising from the state of Samadhi. (36)

अनादाविह संसार संचिताः कर्मकोटयः ।
अर्नेन विलयं यान्ति शुद्धो धर्मोऽभिवर्धते ।।३७।।

Pure virtues begin to flourish when crores of actions accumulated over this endless worldly life, are annulled by means of Samadhi. (37)

धर्ममेघ मिमं प्राहु समाधि योगवित्तमाः ।
वर्षत्येष यथा धर्मामृधाराः सहस्त्रश- ।।३८।।

The best of knowers of Yoga call this Samadhi as the cloud of virtues (a particular consciousness possessing virtues) since it pours the flood waters of virtue in a thousand streams. (38)

अमुना वासनाजाले निःशेषं प्रविलापिते ।
समूलोन्मूलिते पुण्यपापाख्ये कर्मसंचये ।।३९।।
वाक्यप्रतिबद्धं सत् प्राक् परोक्षाव भासते ।
करामलकवद्बोधमपरोक्षं प्रसूयते ।।४०।।

When the entire network of all desires and tendencies is eradicated without any residue by means of this (Samadhi) and all accumulated virtuous and sinful deeds are completely uprooted, then the import of the text, which at first appears twisted and indirect, now becomes clear (without obstruction) and direct like the Amalaka fruit in one's hand.(40)

Steadfast Wisdom and Liberation-in-Life:

Having demonstrated that Samadhi is the means of Self-knowledge now commences the exposition on Jivan Mukti which ensues from this knowledge.

वासनाऽनुदयो भोग्ये वैराग्यस्य तदाऽवधिः ।
अहंभावोदयाभावो बोधस्य परमावधिः ।
लीनवृत्तेरनुत्पत्तिःमर्यादोपरतेस्तु सा ।।४१।।

When there is an absence of desire even amidst sense-objects, then is the culmination of detachment. The extreme perfection of knowledge is the non-occurrence of any egoistic idea. And the peak of abstinence (withdrawal) is reached when mental modifications that have been subdued, they arise no more. (41)

A man of steadfast wisdom is known from his complete desireless state alone and not from his name and fame. He is the one who has given up the egoism that he is a 'knower of Brahman.' A person who has egoism of being a 'knower of Brahman' is not a knower of Brahman in reality.

स्थितप्रज्ञो यतिरयं यः सदानन्दमश्नुते ।
ब्रह्मण्येव विलीनात्मा निर्विकारो विनिष्क्रियः ।।४२।।

This ascetic who enjoys eternal bliss with his soul wholly merged in Brahman, being immutable and free from (worldly) activity, is a man of steadfast wisdom. (42)

बह्मात्मनोः शोधितयोरेकभावावगाहिनी ।
निर्विकल्पा च चिन्मात्रा वृत्तिः प्रज्ञेति कथ्यते ।
सा सर्वदा भवेद्यस्य स जीवन्मुक्त इष्यते ।।४३।।

That mental mode which being purified of all adjuncts, comprehends the identity of Brahman and the Atman (Self) after investigating them and which is of the nature of pure Chit (Intelligence), is called Prajna (Awareness). (43)

देहेन्द्रियेष्वहंभाव इदंभावस्तदन्यके ।
यस्य नो भवतः क्वापि स जीवन्मुक्त इष्यते ।।४४।।

He is said to be a Jivanmukta who never has conceit of 'I' in the body and its organs, etc.; nor the conceit of 'this' in respect of other things (i.e. he transcends the empirical division of subject and object and realizes the Absolute). (44)

न प्रत्यग्ब्रह्मणोर्भेदं कथाऽपि ब्रह्मसर्गयोः ।
प्रज्ञया यो विजानाति स जीवन्मुक्त इष्यते ।।४५।।

He is said to be Jivanmukta (liberated-in-life) who through his integrated awareness never differentiates between inner Atman (Jiva) and Brahman, and also between universe and Brahman. (45)

साधुभिः पूज्य मानेऽस्मिन् पीड्यमानेऽपि दुर्जनैः ।
समभावो भवेद्यस्य स जीवन्मुक्त इष्यते ।।४६।।

He is said to be a Jivanmukta who maintains equanimity when adored by the noble or tormented by wicked persons. (46)

विज्ञातब्रह्मतत्वस्य यथापूर्वं न संसृतिः ।
अस्ति चेन्न स विज्ञातब्रह्मभावो बहिर्मुखः ।।४७।।

For one who has realised the Truth of Brahman, there is no more attachment to worldly life (Samsara) as before. If such Samsara still persists then he is not the one who has realised Brahman, but he is an extrovert. (47)

This may be said to be the final conclusion of this Upanishad. A person who has known his Self has no more ego or sense of "I" in this body. Senses withdrawn and the mind dissolved in Brahman, he has no urge to be involved in worldly life. He experiences infinite bliss and finds supreme satisfaction due to that knowledge. He feels that what has to be done has been done; what has to be attained has been attained and there is nothing left to do or to attain. Due to the predominance of knowledge, he withdraws from what is unreal. If he is still allured by the unreal then he has not known his Self. This is the only difference between the one who has known the Self and the one who is ignorant of the Self.

A doubt is often raised that if one who has realised the Truth of Brahman and has withdrawn from the unreal world then how does he continue to live in the body? Does this Jivan Mukti (liberation-in-life) not liquidate the Prarabdha Karma? This is being set forth now.

Refutation of Hypothesis of Prarabdha Karma (Past Operative Actions):

सुखाद्यनुभवो यावत् तावत् प्रारब्धमिष्यते ।
फलोदय: क्रियापूर्वो निष्क्रियो न हि कुत्रचित् ।।४८।।

Prarabdha is said to persist so long as there is experience of pleasure and the like. Every result is preceded by an action, and nowhere it is seen to accrue without any causal action. (48)

अहं ब्रह्मेति विज्ञानात् कल्पकोटिशतार्जितम् ।
संचितं विलयं याति प्रबोधात् स्वप्नकर्मवत् ।।४९।।

Through the realisation of one's identity with Brahman (i.e I am Brahman), all the accumulated actions accrued over hundred crore of eons get exhausted, like the actions of the dream state on awakening. (49)

This Upanishad seeks to refute the hypothesis of Prarabdha through an analogy of a person who is sleeping. All joy and sorrow experienced due to things seen and actions done in the dream state come to naught when this sleeping person wakes up. Then he realises the unreality of things in dream state. Nadabindu Upanishad (24 & 25) explains further that just as the body seen in the dream state is untrue, so is this body in waking state. Where then is rebirth to a thing that is illusory? That portion of the Karma which is done in previous many births is called Prarabdha Karma. But such Prarabdha does not exist for the wise who has realised the unreality of body and other things through identity with Brahman.

स्वमसङ्गमुदासीनं परिज्ञाय नभो यथा ।
न श्लिष्यते यति: किंचित् कदाचिद् भविकर्मभि: ।।५०।।

Realising himself as unattached and as indifferent like the sky, the ascetic is never affected even in the least by future actions at any time. (50)

न नभो घटयोगेन सुरागन्धेन लिप्यते ।
तथाऽऽत्मोपाधियोगेन तद्धर्मैर्नैव लिप्यते ।।५१।।

Just because of its connection with the jar, the sky is not tainted by the odour of the liquor in it. So too, the Atman is not affected by the qualities of limiting adjuncts with which it is connected. (51)

ज्ञानोदयात् पुराऽऽरब्धं कर्म ज्ञानान्न नश्यति ।
अदत्वा स्वफलं लक्ष्यमुद्दिश्योत्सृष्टबाणवत् ।।५२।।

The action (Karma) which has commenced before the dawn of knowledge ('I am Brahman') is not destroyed by that knowledge like an arrow shot to hit a target (stops not before hitting it). (52)

व्याघ्रबुद्ध्या विनिर्मुक्तो बाणः पश्चात्तु गोमतौ ।
न तिष्ठति भिनत्त्येव लक्ष्यं वेगेन निर्भरम् ।।५३।।

The arrow which is shot under the impression that the target is a tiger does not stop upon realisation that it (target) is a cow, but surely pierces the target with full force. (53)

The above two Slokas mention the traditional belief about Prarabdha Karma which holds the view that Prarabdha Karmas are not destroyed even after the dawn of Self-knowledge. Prarabdha Karmas get exhausted only after undergoing the consequences of actions. This view is being refuted now.

अजरोऽस्म्यमरोऽस्मीति य आत्मानं प्रपद्यते ।
तदात्मना तिष्ठतोऽस्य कुतः प्रारब्धकल्पना ।।५४।।

One who knows one's Self as ' I am undecaying', 'I am immortal' and abides in that Self, how can he imagine Prarabdha (past operative actions)? (54)

प्रारब्धं सिध्यति तदा यदा देहात्मना स्थितिः ।
देहात्मभावो नैवेष्टः प्रारब्धं त्यज्यतामतः ।।५५।।

Prarabdha is valid so long as there is identification (of the Atman) with the body. But the proposition of the body being Atman is inadmissible (in case of a self-realised soul). Therefore Prarabdha has to be rejected (in his case). (55)

प्रारब्धकल्पनाऽप्यस्य देहस्य भ्रान्ति रेष हि ।
अध्यस्तस्य कुतः सत्त्वम् असत्त्वस्य कुतो जनिः।
अजातस्य कुतो नाशः प्रारब्धमसतः कुतः ।।५६।।

The hypothesis of Prarabdha is also, indeed, an illusion due to this body. How can anything which is superimposed (body is a superimposition on Atma) be said to exist really and how can that which is unreal (Prarabdha is attributed to the superimposed body) have a birth (Prarabdha is accepted because of birth of the body)? How can that which is unborn (Soul has no birth due to Prarabdha) be destroyed (it is absurd to think of destroying Prarabdha pertaining to the soul)? Whence then is Prarabdha? (56)

ज्ञानेनज्ञानकार्यस्य समूलस्य लयो यदि ।
तिष्ठत्ययं कथं देह इति शंकावतो जडान् ।।५७।।
समाधातुं बाह्यदृष्टया प्रारब्धं वदति श्रुतिः ।
न तु देहादिसत्यत्वबोधनाय विपश्चिताम् ।।५८।।

In order to reply to the dull-witted who doubtfully ask how this body persists if the entire effects of ignorance along with their root cause are destroyed by knowledge, the Shruti speaks of Prarabdha from an empirical point of view and not for teaching to the wise about reality of the body, etc. (57 & 58)

We find conflicting views on the hypothesis of Prarabdha Karma in various scriptures. This Upanishad sets forth the final and conclusive view on the hypothesis of Prarabdha Karma. The Nada-Bindu Upanishad (28 & 29) also questions the reality of Prarabdha Karma. "When he knows the eternal substratum of everything and whole universe, therefore is rendered void, when then is Prarabdha to him, the body being a part of the world? Therefore Prarabdha is accepted only to enlighten the ignorant."

Nature of Brahman:

The next four Slokas describe the nature of Brahman and deny any duality in It.

परिपूर्णमनाद्यन्तमप्रमेयमविक्रियम् ।
सद्घनं चिद्घनं नित्यमानन्दघनमव्ययम् ।।५९।।

(Brahman is) infinite, without beginning or end, unfathomable and changeless. (He is) the mass of Being, Awareness and Eternal Bliss and imperishable in nature. (59)

प्रत्यगेकरसं पूर्णमनन्तं सर्वतोमुखम् ।
अहेयमनुपादेयम् अनाधेयमनाश्रयम् ।।६०।।

(Brahman is) within all, homogeneous, wholesome, endless and facing everywhere. Being one's own nature, He is not the one to be discarded or accepted, not the one dependent on another, nor having any support. (60)

निर्गुणं निष्क्रियं सूक्ष्मं निर्विकल्पं निरञ्जनम् ।
अनिरूप्यस्वरूपं यन्मनोवाचामगोचरम् ।।६१।।

(Brahman is) attributeless, actionless, subtle, absolute, taintless. (He is) of indeterminate nature, beyond mind and speech. (61)

सत्समृद्धं स्वतःसिद्धं शुद्धं बुद्धमनीदृशम् ।
एकमेवाद्वयं ब्रह्म नेह नानाऽस्ति किंचन ।।६२।।

There is only Brahman, the one without a second, the uncontradicted reality, absolutely blissful, self-existent, pure, intelligent, and without comparison; there is no duality whatsoever in it. (62)

Direct Experiential Knowledge:

The preceptor having imparted the indirect knowledge of Self, exhorts the disciple to acquire the direct knowledge through one's own Self-experience. The Shruti says that scriptures, reasoning, and words of the preceptor are the means to acquire indirect knowledge while one's own experience is the means of direct knowledge and hence the ultimate proof.

स्वानुभूत्या स्वयं ज्ञात्वा स्वमात्मानमखण्डितम् ।
संसिद्धः सुसुखं तिष्ठन् निर्विकल्पात्मनात्मनि ।।६३।।

Knowing oneself as the indivisible Atman by one's own experience, one should establish oneself blissfully in Atman by the Nirvikalpa - state. (63)

The disciple having attained that Nirvikalpa state for quite some time with senses withdrawn and the mind completely merged in the infinite, regains his normal consciousness and expresses his inner joy in the following verses.

क्व गतं केन वा नीतं कुत्र लीनमिदं जगत् ।
अधुनैव मया दृष्टं नास्ति किं महदद्भुतम् ।।६४।।

Where has the universe disappeared? By whom has it been taken away? Where has it merged? It was sighted by me just now and has it ceased to exist? How strange is it! (64)

किं हेयं किमुपादेयं किमन्यत् किं विलक्षणम् ।
अखण्डानन्दपीयूषपूर्णे ब्रह्ममहार्णवे ।।६५।।

In this great ocean of Brahman filled with the nectar of infinite bliss, what is to be rejected and what is to be accepted, what is other (than one's own Self) and what is distinct ? (65)

न किंचिदत्र पश्यामि न श्रृणोमि न वेद् म्यहम् ।
स्वात्मनैव सदानन्दरूपेणास्मि विलक्षणः ।।६६।।

Neither I see anything nor I listen nor do I know anything in this (state). I simply exist as the Self, the eternal bliss being distinct from anything else (like five sheaths or any other object). (66)

असङ्गोऽहमनङ्गोऽहम् अलिङ्गोऽहमभङ्गुरः ।
प्रशान्तोऽहमनन्तोऽहम् परिपूर्णश्चिरन्तनः ।।६७।।

I am unattached (separate from the world), I am disembodied, I am devoid of the subtle body, (I am) undecaying, I am serene, I am Infinite, I am absolute (undifferentiated), and (I am) eternal. (67)

अकर्ताऽहमभोक्ताऽहमविकारोऽहमक्रियः ।
शुद्धबोधस्वरूपोऽहं केवलोऽहं सदाशिवः ।।६८।।

I am not the doer, I am not the enjoyer, I am changeless and actionless, I am the essence of pure knowledge, I am alone (substratum of everything known as aloofness), ever auspicious. (68)

Line of traditional teachers of this knowledge :

एतां विद्यामपान्तरतमाय ददौ । अपान्तरतमो ब्रह्मणे ददौ । ब्रह्मा घोराङ्गिरसे ददौ ।
घोराङ्गिरा रैक्काय ददौ । रैक्को रामाय ददौ । रामः सर्वेभ्यो भूतेभ्यो
ददावित्येतन्निर्वाणानुशासनं वेदानुशासनं वेदानुशासनमित्युपनिषत् ।।६९।।

This knowledge was imparted to Apantaratamas. He imparted to Brahma, who passed it on to Ghorangiras. Ghorangiras impated to Raikva and Raikva passed it on to Rama. Rama imparted it to all beings. This is the injunction for Nirvana, this is the command of the Vedas, of the Vedas. This is the esoteric doctrine. (69)

ॐ तत् सत्



सरस्वतीरहस्योपनिषत्
(SARASVATI RAHASYOPANISHAD)*

* The Upanishad delineating the secret of Goddess Sarasvati



सरस्वतीरहस्योपनिषत्
SARASVATI RAHASYOPANISHAD

Introduction:

This Upanishad belonging to Krishna Yajur Veda is the one hundred sixth among the 108 Upanishads. This Upanishad describes the secret of the Goddess Sarasvati. The Absolute Brahman possessing creative power is worshipped as the supreme Goddess. Goddess Sarasvati is one among the many forms of the supreme Goddess. Various names like Bhagavati (glorious or adorable), Ila (truth-vision), Vishruti (truth-audition), Bharati or Mahi (vast and luminous consciousness), Pavaka (purifying), Sharada (a form of Sarasvati), etc., are attributed to Goddess Sarasvati. She is the bestower of all knowledge including Brahma Jnana and in the Vedic religion she is well known by various epithets like Goddess of Knowledge and Illumination, Goddess of Purity, Goddess of Speech, Goddess of Inspiration, Goddess of Supreme Felicity, etc. Those who are unaware of this secret may conclude that Sarasvati is just one among the seven rivers which flowed during the Rig-Vedic era carrying the light of the luminous solar world and possessing a great purifying power. However, the Vedas present a double meaning in their hymns; the one associated with the external nature and the other related to the internal nature.

The Goddess Sarasvati is that pure and sacred inner stream of Truth-consciousness (or Ritam) that flows from the vast heaven (divine consciousness) to the earth (physical consciousness), transforming its substance with Her purifying power and uplifting the human consciousness from the bondage or limitation of matter to the enlightenment or freedom of the spirit. Sarasvati is the creative consciousness of non-dual Brahman in pure Sattva form. She, having a graceful form of bright white light, transcends the impurities of earthly consciousness. The Vedas have not presented any anthropomorphic form of Sarasvati. However, later scriptures like the Puranas describe Her as *Subhravastravata*, the one who is clad in spotless white which signifies purity. Shining brilliantly in Her traditional snow white dress, seated on the white lotus and wearing white crystal ornaments, the Goddess Sarasvati personifies purity. Thus She is verily worshipped as the *Goddess of Purity*.

Goddess Sarasvati is called *'Ritavari'*, the one who possesses the Truth. She awakens the higher supra sensory faculties which bring right perceptions and right vision based on the principle of *Ritam*. This right perception and right vision liberate the human soul from the bondage of sense objects. The human soul then transcends the world of mortals and enters into the world of immortality. This elevation of consciousness to a new dimension of spiritual reality bestows inspirations to the human soul. Thus Sarasvati is the *Goddess of Inspiration* who inspires a devout soul with the words of Truth. It is through Her grace alone that one becomes a seer of Truth.

Goddess Sarasvati illuminates our entire intellectual faculty with Her Truth-Consciousness impelling a change of thought which liberates the mind from the limitation and bondage of mortal consciousness and grants the supreme felicity of immortal life. Thus Sarasvati is known as the *Goddess of Illumination* and the *Goddess of Supreme Felicity*.

She is the Jnana Shakti (power of wisdom) of Non-dual Brahman and Her vehicle swan symbolises this power. Hamsa (or Paramhamsa) is the one who transcends all the imperfections of the phenomenal world through the power of intuitional discrimination. Sarasvati, who resides in the heart of everyone as Vijnana (intuitive or supra sensory knowledge) and helps in understanding the scriptures, is indeed adored by the wise as the *Goddess of Learning or Goddess of Knowledge*. She is the embodiment of all knowledge both secular and spiritual who leads Her devotee to enlightenment. She is manifest and specially revered in all educational institutions.

She dwells in the profound depth of the supreme ether of the heart as 'Vak', and manifests as the gross form of speech on the tip of the tongue impelling true, sacred and melodious speech. Thus She is glorified as the *Goddess of Speech* (*Vaagdevi*). This speech permits the transmission of ideas, wisdom, and culture. Thus the grace of the Goddess Sarasvati is always invoked for the refinement, perfection and proficiency in philosophy, poetry, literature, music, and sacred rituals.

This indeed is the inner secret of the great purifying virgin Goddess Sarasvati. Sage Asvalayana, who was a teacher of Rig-Veda, reveals this secret to the sages in this Upanishad through ten Mantras. Sages

then propitiate the Goddess through various hymns. Pleased with the invocation of the sages, the great Goddess reveals Her identity with the non-dual Brahman. However, one cannot understand the non-dual Brahman without overcoming the dual power of Maya. This Upanishad recommends the constant practice of Samadhi for this end. This Upanishad concludes its exposition by showing the illusory nature of Jiva (individual soul) and Iswara (universal soul) in the non-dual Truth of Brahman.

The worshiper of Goddess Sarasvati enters into the realm of pure consciousness, where She withdraws the veil of Maya. Then devotee realises the non-dual Truth of Brahman and attains liberation.

शान्तिमन्त्राः

Shanti Mantra:

ॐ वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठित माविरावीर्म एधि ।
वेदस्य म आणीस्थः श्रुतं मे मा प्रहासीरनेनाधीतेनाहोरात्रान् संदधाम्यृतं वदिष्यामि ।
सत्यं वदिष्यामि तन्मामवतु । तद्वक्तारमवतु । अवतु मामवतु वक्तारं अवतु वक्तारम् ।।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।।

Om! My speech is in conformance with the mind. My mind is in conformance with the speech. O Self-effulgent (Brahman), reveal Thyself to me. May (speech and mind) bring (make known) the Vedas to me. May not all that I have heard depart from me. I shall unite (Sandhami) day and night through the study of the Vedas. I shall speak the Truth (Ritam). I shall think of the Truth (Sathyam). May That (Brahman) protect me; may that protect the speaker (i.e. the teacher); may That protect me; may That protect the speaker, may That protect the speaker.

Om Peace! Peace! Peace!

ऋषयो ह वै भगवन्तमाश्वलायनं संपूज्य पप्रच्छु :-

The sages with due reverence truly asked the venerable Asvalayana.

केनोपायेन तत् ज्ञानं तत्पदार्थावभासकम् ।
यदुपासनया तत्त्वं जानासि भगवन् वद।।१।।

Venerable Sir, How is that knowledge attained which reveals (illumines) the subject matter Tat (Transcendental Principle)? Narrate to us that by meditating on which you know the Truth. (1)

सरस्वतीदश श्लोक्या सऋचा बीजमिश्रया ।
स्तुत्वा जप्त्वा परां सिद्धिमलभं मुनिपुङ्गवा ।।२।।

O eminent sages! Supreme perfection is attained by reciting ten verses along with Riks and 'Seed-syllables' in praises of the Goddess Sarasvati. (2)

ऋषय ऊचुः-

कथं सारस्वतप्राप्तिः केन ध्यानेन सुव्रत ।
महासरस्वती येन तुष्टा भगवती वद।।३।।

The sages said:
How is Goddess Sarasvati attained? By what meditation is the great purifying Goddess Sarasvati won? (Please) narrate (to us), what pleases the Goddess Bhagavati? (3)

Sage Asvalayana imparts ten Mantras to the sages for propitiating the Goddess Sarasvati. The Rig-Veda mentions all these Ten Mantras along with the name of their seers to whom these Mantras were first revealed. However, this Upanishad describes a secret syllable for meditation and a prayer for protection before commencing each of these Ten Mantras.

The sage first prescribes Nyasa (consecration of limbs) in the name of six deities, viz., Sh*raddha, Medha, Prajna, Dharana, Vak Devata and Maha Sarasvati* before commencing meditation on the great Goddess Sarasvati. The great purifying Goddess has a divine form of pure white light. A devotee should invoke the Goddess through these ten Mantras with meditation on Her divine form. The result of this worship is purity of thoughts in the mind, illumination of the intellect and plenitude of speech which ultimately grants spiritual wealth of bliss of an immortal life.

स होवाचाश्वलायनः-
अस्य श्रीसरस्वतीदश श्लोकमहामन्त्रस्य - अहमाश्वलायन ऋषिः । अनुष्टुप् छन्दः।

श्रीवागीश्वरी देवता। यद्वागिति बीजम्। देवीं वाचमिति शक्तिः । प्रणो देवीति कीलकम् । विनियोगस्तत्प्रीत्यर्थे। श्रद्धा मेधा प्रज्ञा धारणा वाग्देवता महासरस्वतीत्येतैरङ्गन्यासः।।४।।

That very Asvalayana said:
Of this great Mantra of ten verses on Sarasvati – I, Asvalayana, am the seer. The eight syllabled 'Anustubh' is the metre. The auspicious Vagisvari is the deity. 'Yadvak' is the syllable (mystical letter forming the essential part of the Mantra). 'Devim Vacham' is the active power. 'Pra no Devi' is the inner syllable of the Mantra. The application of Mantra is to please Her. Faith (Shradha), intelligence (Medha), awareness (Prajna), concentration (Dharana), deity of speech (Vagdevata), and great Goddess Sarasvati (Mahasarasvati) are (invoked) for consecration of limbs (assigning various limbs of the body to tutelary deities). (4)

नीहारहारघनसारसुधाकराभां कल्याणदां कनकचम्पकदामभूषाम् ।
उत्तुङ्पीनकुचकुम्भमनोहराङ्गी वाणीं नमामि मनसा वचसां विभूत्यै।।५।।

The one who shines (pure white) like frost, pearls, mercury and the moon; bestows auspiciousness; adorned with garlands of golden Champaka flowers; having a dignified and charming form - I offer reverential salutation to the Goddess Sarasvati in my heart in order to win plenitude of speech. (5)

First Mantra:

In the first Mantra, the sage Bharadvaja prays to the Goddess Sarasvati for vigour of life force and purity of thoughts which are the basic qualifications for the performance of sacrifice.

प्रणो देवीत्यस्य मन्त्रस्य- भरद्वाज ऋषिः । गायत्री छन्दः। श्रीसरस्वती देवता । प्रणवेन बीज शक्तिकीलकम्। इष्टार्थे विनियोगः । मन्त्रेण न्यासः ।।६।।

For 'Pra no Devi' Mantra, sage Bharadvaja is the seer; Gayatri is the metre; Sri Sarasvati is the deity; Pranava is the mystical syllable and active power of the Mantra; its application is for obtaining the cherished desire; consecration (of limbs of the body) is through the Mantra. (6)

या वेदान्तार्थतत्वैकस्वरूपा परमेश्वरी।
नामरूपात्मना व्यक्ता सा मां पातु सरस्वती ।।७।।

She, whose nature is the essence of the meaning of Vedanta; being the supreme ruler; who manifests as the names and forms - may She, divine Sarasvati, protect me! (7)

ॐ प्रणो देवी सरस्वती वाजेभिर्वाजिनीवती। धीनामवित्र्यवतु ।।८।।

O Goddess Sarasvati, salutation to You, bestower of vigour of life-force (Vajebhir), dispenser of spiritual wealth (knowledge) in sacrifice (Vajinivati), the guardian (Avitri) of noble thoughts or intellect (Dhinam), may You protect us (Avatu). (8)

The word 'Vaaj' has many meanings associated with sacrifice, like energy, vigour, swift horse, treasure, oblation, etc. This shows that Goddess Sarasvati is a great dynamic force of life or divine energy who facilitates the ascent of the human consciousness to a divine plane beyond the realm of the mental plane. A sacrifice is only an external symbol of this ascent. She embodies the swift or dynamic waves of Truth-consciousness (symbolised as a horse in the Rig-Veda) who possess a great treasure of noble virtues. She purifies our mind with noble ideas and illuminates our intellect with clear discernement and right perception. She is very generous in conferring knowledge and enlightenment upon the seekers of Truth. It is through Her grace that one becomes a *Sarvajna* or an all knowing one.

This is a very powerful Mantra of the Goddess Sarasvati and very often recommended for repetition during Japa Sadhana. This Mantra is a part of Sukta 61, Mandala 6 of Rig-Veda Samhita. In this Sukta, Sage Bharadvaja extols Goddess Sarasvati as the swift rays of pure divine consciousness who destroyed the veiling power of Vritra and the hostile power of Panis. Panis are the forces of darkness who obstruct the descent of divine consciousness in man and conceal the light for their own selfish gain. In the following Mantra (6.61.3) Sage Bharadvaja prays to the Goddess to destroy the censurers of the gods, the progeny of Brisaya, who create illusory forms to delude a devout soul.

सरस्वति देवनिदो नि बर्हय प्रजां विश्वस्य बृसयस्य मायिनः ।
उत क्षितिभ्योऽवनीरविन्दो विषमेभ्यो अस्रवो वाजिनीवति ।।६.६१.३।।

"O Sarasvati, destroy the censurers (Nida) of the Gods, the progeny of Brisaya, the universal deluder. Grant happiness to the (godly and saintly) people of the earth and for these (the hostile powers), trickle poison, O Thou bestower of spiritual wealth."

Sarasvati overcomes all obstacles through Her swift rays of consciousness, and protects Her worshipers from the possession of these evil thought forces of Panis and secures their release by uplifting human consciousness to a divine plane. In Rig-Veda, a journey or ascent towards divine consciousness is described as sacrifice. To facilitate this sacrifice, the Goddess Sarasvati must destroy hostile forces and bestow noble thoughts (illumined intellect) on the devotees. Therefore, in the first Mantra, the seer first prays to the Goddess for protection against these hostile forces. In this Sukta (6.61) of Rig-Veda, the seer depicts Sarasvati as the mighty force or divine power who destroys the evil forces with great impetus.

Second Mantra:

In this Mantra, the sage prays to Goddess Sarasvati to descend from the heavenly sphere of light and take delight in the invocations of the devotees.

आ नो दिव इति मन्त्रस्य - अत्रिऋषिः। त्रिष्टुप् छन्दः। सरस्वती देवता। ह्रीमिति बीजशक्तिकीलकम्। इष्टार्थे विनियोगः। मन्त्रेण न्यासः।।९।।

For 'Aa No Divi' Mantra; sage Atri is the seer; Tristubh is the metre; Sarasvati is the deity; Hrim is the mystical syllable and active power of the Mantra; its application is for obtaining the cherished desire; consecration (of limbs of the body) is through Mantra. (9)

या साङ्गोपाङ्गवेदेषु चतुर्ष्वेकैव गीयते।
अद्वैता ब्रह्मणः शक्तिः सा मां पातु सरस्वती।।१०।।

She, who alone has been extolled in the four Vedas and the Vedangas (auxiliary to the Vedas), power of non-dual Brahman – may, She, divine Sarasvati, protect me! (10)

ह्रीं आ नो दिवो बृहतः पर्वतादा सरस्वती यजता गन्तु यज्ञम् ।
हवं देवी जुजुषाणा घृताची शग्मां नो वाचमुशती शृणोतु।।११।।

Hrim, may adorable Sarasvati approach our sacrifice from the vast heaven and from the summit (Parvat). Taking delight (Jujush) in our invocation (Havam), (flowing with streams) full of clarity (Ghritachi), may the purifying Goddess, hearing our recitation grant sweet words of bliss. (11)

This Mantra appears as Sukta 43 in Mandala 5 of Rig Veda Samhita. This Mantra was first revealed to Sage Atri from the vast heaven or supreme ether where all the gods reside. Sage Atri desirous of performing sacrifice in order to acquire spiritual wealth of bliss invokes Goddess Sarasvati pleading for clarity and purity of thoughts. Sarasvati is the river of Truth-consciousness which flows not upon the earth, but in the heaven. She flows down from the summit of earth-consciousness (i.e. exalted mental consciousness) as the streams of clarity, purifying the mind and infusing vital energy through Her divine waters of inspirations. The mental plane is the highest plane which can be realised by man through his normal earthly consciousness. Other planes transcend this earthly consciousness and belong to spiritual planes.

Third Mantra:

In this Mantra, the sage prays to the Goddess Sarasvati to accept the offerings of the devotees in the sacrifice. The sage offers oblations in the form of Riks which awakens spiritual knowledge.

पावका न इति मन्त्रस्य - मधुच्छन्दा ऋषिः। गायत्री छन्दः। सरस्वती देवता। श्रीमिति बीजशक्तिकीलकम् । इष्टार्थे वनियोगः। मन्त्रेण न्यासः ।।१२।।

'Pavaka Nah' is the Mantra, Madhucchanda is the seer; Gayatri is the metre; Sarasvati is the deity; 'Srim' is the mystical syllable and active power of the Mantra; its application is for obtaining the cherished desire; consecration (of limbs of the body) is through the Mantra. (12)

या वर्णपदवाक्यार्थस्वरूपेणैव वर्तते ।
अनादिनिधनाऽनन्ता सा मां पातु सरस्वती ।।१३।।

She, who exists solely in the form of meaning of letter, word, and sentence, without beginning and without end, may, She, divine Sarasvati, protect me. (13)

श्रीं पावका नः सरस्वती वाजेभिर्वाजिनीवती ।
यज्ञं वष्टु धिया वसुः ।।१४।।

Srim, may purifying (Pavaka) Sarasvati, bestower of vigour of life-force (Vajebhih); dispenser of spiritual wealth (knowledge or intelligence) in sacrifice (Vajinivati), generous in granting understanding or intellectual knowledge (Dhiya Vasu), cherish (or accept) our oblations (offered to the deity) in sacrifice (Yajnam Vastu). (14)

This Rik is frequently chanted during the ritualistic worship of Goddess Sarasvati. Here sage Madhucchanda describes Sarasvati (Rig-Veda Samhita 1.4.10) as the purifying Goddess (*Pavaka*) who purifies the human consciousness from falsehood and bestows righteousness. Sarasvati is the embodiment of pure consciousness or Spirit who confers illumination of the intellect. This illumination of the intellect brings about a clear understanding and discriminative knowledge of things around us. It compels a change of thoughts in the mind in conformance with the Truth. Here Goddess Sarasvati is described as the treasure of all virtues who generously grants the gifts of knowledge, intelligence and understanding. These virtues are spoken of as spiritual wealth for the seekers of knowledge.

Fourth Mantra:

In this Mantra, sage Madhucchanda prays to the Goddess to uphold the sacrifice by awakening noble and pure thoughts. This prayer is offered in order to remove all obstacles in the performance of sacrifice.

चोदयित्रीति मन्त्रस्य - मधुच्छन्दा ऋषिः। गायत्री छन्दः । सरस्वती देवता । ब्लूमिति बीजशक्तिकीलकम् । मन्त्रेण न्यासः।। १५।।

'Chodayitri' is the Mantra. Madhucchanda is the seer. Gayatri is the metre; Sarasvati is the deity; 'Blum' is the mystical syllable and active

power of the Mantra; consecration (of limbs of the body) is through the Mantra. (15)

अध्यात्ममधिदेवं च देवानां सम्यगीश्वरी।
प्रत्यगास्ते वदन्ती या सा मां पातु सरस्वती ।।१६।।

She, who is the supreme spirit, sovereign ruler of gods and demi-gods, who exist as the inner voice, may divine Sarasvati, protect me. (16)

ब्लूं चोदयित्री सूनृतानां चेतन्ती सुमतीनाम् ।
यज्ञं दधे सरस्वती ।।१७।।

'Blum' (by) inspiring (Chodayanti) polite and truthful words (Sunirtanam), awakening (Chetanti) good thoughts or intellect (Sumatinam), Sarasvati upholds the sacrifice. (17)

In this Mantra of sage Madhucchanda (Rig-Veda Samhita 1.4.11) Sarasvati is personified as the Goddess of polite and truthful words *(Sunirtanam)* who bestows the right state of mind and right thinking (Sumatinam). She provides warmth to the soul in its journey towards God. It is through Her favour alone that one becomes a seer of Truth and attains Brahman. The seer describes Sarasvati as the Goddess who upholds the sacrifice by receiving the offerings of the mortal beings. She awakens the consciousness of mortal beings and elevates them to a higher mental plane by driving away wrong ideas and wrong emotions from the mind.

Fifth Mantra:

In this Mantra the sage prays to the Goddess to grant right perception based on supra sensory faculties. Supra sensory faculties alone can bring purification of the being through the vast stream of Truth-consciousness. Perception through ordinary faculties signifies the extrovert nature of the being which is responsible for all impure thoughts, while perception through supra sensory faculties signifies the introvert nature of the being which awakens pure and noble thoughts in the mind.

महो अर्णोति मन्त्रस्य - मधुच्छन्दा ऋषिः । गायत्री छन्दः । सरस्वती देवता । सौरिति

बीजशक्तिकीलकम् । मन्त्रेण न्यास: ।।१८।।

'Maho Arnah' is the Mantra. Madhucchanda is the seer. Gayatri is the metre; Sarasvati is the deity; 'Sauh' is the mystical syllable and active power of the Mantra; consecration (of limbs of the body) is through the Mantra. (18)

अन्तर्याम्यात्मना विश्वं त्रैलोक्यं या नियच्छति ।
रुद्रादित्यादिरूपस्था सा मां पातु सरस्वती ।।१९।।

She, who is invoked as the inner Self, ruler of the three worlds, who dwells in the form of Rudra, Aditya and others, may, She, divine Sarasvati protect me. (19)

In the Vedas, the gods like Rudra, Aditya, Indra, etc., are identified with the Praana. It is also mentioned that these gods work through the vast power of great stream of Truth-Consciousness. Sarasvati has been symbolically represented as Great Ocean or Great Flood. Verse 16 leaves us in no doubt that Sarasvati is the inner Self of the gods who awaken in the consciousness the vast movement of *Ritam* from which flows truthful words. She is the sovereign ruler who governs all the activities of gods through this vast movement of *Ritam*. She has been described as Brahmic Consciousness (Shakti or power of non-dual Brahman) in verse 10. In the Rig-Veda, three virgin Goddesses Ila, Bharati or Mahi and Sarasvati are invoked simultaneously in the various hymns to confer the bliss of the Self. We do not find any reference of Sarasvati being a consort of Lord Brahma. It is only after Rig-Vedic Era that She has been described as the consort of Lord Brahma in mythological scriptures.

सौ महो अर्ण: सरस्वती प्रचेतयति केतुना ।
धियो विश्वा विराजति ।।२०।।

'Saüh', Sarasvati, the vast stream (Maha Arna) of inspiration, who makes us sentient (Prachetyati) by right perceptions (Ketuna – clear discernment), illumines the entire (Visva Vi Rajati) intellectual faculty (Dhiyah - discriminative faculty based on supra sensory perceptions of the embodied soul). (20)

This hymn of sage Madhucchanda in which Goddess Sarasvati has

been invoked, appears in the Mandala 1, Sukta 3, Sloka 10-12 of Rig Veda Samhita. The seer refers to Sarasvati as the vast stream or the great river. Saynacharya translates Sarasvati as a great river in North India which flowed during the Rig Vedic Era. But this translation will lead us to an incoherent meaning of the above verse. This hymn reveals the inner secret of the great Goddess. Sarasvati in reality is the ever flowing vast stream of Truth – consciousness which purifies the aspirants. Imagery has been presented in the Vedas where crossing this vast stream symbolises passing over from the world of ignorance or bondage to the far shore of the world of enlightenment or freedom. This transition from the world of mortals to the world of immortality brings inspiration. The mind of the mortal being is normally confined to sense perceptions. Inspiration comes from supra sensory perception. Thus Sarasvati is the power of Truth-consciousness who bestows inspiration.

This inspiration purifies our inner instruments and liberates them from all limitations of sense perceptions. Goddess Sarasvati awakens higher supra sensory faculties which brings right perceptions and right vision. She confers right thought in the mind and right discrimination in the intellect. This inspiration or awakening is associated with the descent of Vijnana or intuitive knowledge. Thus in Rig-Veda Sarasvati symbolises the vast stream of Truth-Consciousness and not a river in North India (more particularly Punjab).

Sixth Mantra:

In this Mantra the Goddess is extolled as Vagdevi who exists in four Padas (grades or phases), the three of them (viz. *Para, Pashyanti and Madhyama)* abide in profound secrecy and are known only to the great Yogis while the ordinary people know only the fourth Pada (viz. *Vaikhari)* which is articulated by all living beings.

चत्वारि वागिति मन्त्रस्य उचथ्यपुत्र ऋषिः । त्रिष्टुप् छन्दः । सरस्वती देवता । ऐमिति बीजशक्तिकीलकम् । मन्त्रेण न्यासः ।।२१।।

'Chatvari Vak' is the Mantra. Uchathyaputra is the seer. Tristubh is the metre; Sarasvati is the deity; 'Aim' is the mystical syllable and active power of the Mantra; consecration (of limbs of the body) is

through the Mantra. (21)

या प्रतयग्दृष्टिभिर्जीवैर्व्यज्यमानानुभूयते।
व्यापिनी ज्ञप्तिरूपैका सा मां पातु सरस्वती ।।२२।।

She, who is experienced (Anubhuyate) by the seers through the mystical vision of inner Self (Pratyag), who pervades (microcosm & macrocosm) in the form of non-dual awareness, may, She, divine Sarasvati protect me. (22)

ऐं चत्वारि वाक् परिमिता पदानि तानि विदुर्ब्राह्मणा ये मनीषिण: ।
गुहा त्रीणि निहिता नेङ्गयन्ति तुरीयं वाचो मनुष्या वदन्ति।।२३।।

Aim, Vak (Sound) is measured (Parimita) in four grades (Padani); those wise Brahmana (knower of Sabda Brahman or lower Brahman) know them. Three of them (Pada) abiding in profound secrecy (in an unarticulated state in the cavity of the heart) cause no movement of organs (like movement of palate, lips, tongue, etc.) while the fourth grade (speech) is articulated by the man. (23)

This Mantra is a part of Sukta 164 of Mandala 1 of Rig-Veda Samhita (1.164.45). In this Sukta sage Dirghtma Uchathyaputra describes through his mystical vision that supreme ether where all the 'Riks' exist. This supreme ether also exists in the cavity of the heart which is revealed only to the Yogis who have known the nature of Sabda Brahman. Sound exists in four grades viz. *Para, Pashyanti, Madhyama and Vaikhari.* Out of these Para (sound in supreme ether), Pashyanti (Sound in the mind) and Madhyama (sound in the life force of vocal organs) are the three unarticulated sounds which proceed from the heart and are audible to only sages while *Vaikhari* (sound articulated through the organs) is the gross and objective sound which is articulated by an ordinary man. The Goddess Sarasvati, who presides over all these grades of sound, is also known as *Vagdevi.* She grants plenitude of speech by awakening the soul to higher mystical experiences and enlightening the mind with right thought.

Seventh Mantra:

In this Mantra the sage prays to the Goddess to descend from the heavenly sphere of super-consciousness and energise the earthly

(material) consciousness. This descent enables a four fold transformation of the being leading to the supreme state.

यद्वाग्वदन्तीति मन्त्रस्य भार्गव ऋषिः । त्रिष्टुप् छन्दः । सरस्वती देवता । क्लीमिति बीजशक्तिकीलकम् । मन्त्रेण न्यासः ।।२४।।

'Yadvak Vadanti' is the Mantra. Bhargava is the seer. Tristubh is the metre; Sarasvati is the deity; 'Klim' is the mystical syllable and active power of the Mantra; consecration (of limbs of the body) is through the Mantra. (24)

नामजात्यादिभिर्भेदैरष्टधा या विकल्पिता।
निर्विकल्पात्मना व्यक्ता सा मां पातु सरस्वती ।।२५।।

She, who is the expressive power of the undifferentiated Supreme Self (beyond thought), who is thought of as eightfold differentiated personified cosmic energies based on name, order, etc., may, She, divine Sarasvati protect me. (25)

Goddess Sarasvati is described here as the creative power of unmanifested sound (Vak) who is the cause of entire creation. She represents the expressive power of the super consciousness. It is She who differentiates Herself in the form of eight personified cosmic energies. These personified energies are variously referred to by the names Brahmi, Maheshvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Aindri (Indrani), Chamunda (Narasimhi) and Kalasamkarsini (Kali). Brahmi is the Vedic goddess Vak who creates this universe. Maheshvari is the supreme Vedic goddess Shachi, the *Mulaprakriti* who gives individuality to the created beings according to their three Gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas). Kaumari is the Vedic goddess Svaha or Agni-Jataveda's wife who represents the soul-force present in every created being which is essential for evolution of the soul. Vaishnavi is the Vedic goddess Ushas who sustains all beings through Truth of unity and harmony. Varahi is the Vedic Goddess Yami or Prithvi who grants power of assimilation and delight. It is because of her, that the living beings get their food and all physical enjoyments. Aindri is the Vedic goddess Aditi symbolising indivisible consciousness who destroys all that opposes the cosmic law and order of unity and harmony. Chamunda is the Vedic goddess Prishni (Rudrani) who represents the purified life force that destroys all mental modifications

(*Chitta-Vritti*). She restrains the mind by bringing spiritual awakening in the heart. Kalasamkarsini (or Durga) is the power of time. She is the all-devouring and all-destroying Time. Thus these energies are of Rig-Vedic origin and are invoked for awakening of Kundalini Shakti in Rig-Veda (I.141.7).

क्लीं यद्वाग्वदन्त्यविचेतनानि राष्ट्री देवानां निषसाद मन्द्रा।
चतस्त्र ऊर्जं दुदुहे पयांसि क्व स्विदस्याः परमं जगाम ।।२६।।

Klim, when 'Vak', queen (Rashtri) of the gods, residing (Nishashad) in the heavenly sphere (Mandra) (where 'Riks' abide) manifests (kindles her creative power) in the unconscious regions of earth or mortal body (Avichetan), She brings forth (Duduhe-lit. meaning milking) fourfold streams of energy of illumination (light) and bliss (payasi- lit. meaning milk); where is that supreme (immortal) world (of vastness, light and bliss)?(26)

This Sukta is taken from Rig-Veda Samhita (8.100.10). Here seer Jamdagni Bhargava explains the formation of higher planes of consciousness (or worlds) in our journey towards divine-consciousness which is depicted as an act of sacrifice in Rig-Veda. Creative Goddess Vak kindles a fourfold transformation in our nature (mortal body) through Her divine energies. She transforms physical (Bhu), nervous (intermediate space or Bhuvar) and mental (heaven or Swar) consciousness and reveals the supreme world of Supramental Consciousness which grants 'Payas' or rays of illumination. The seer describes Sarasvati as the Goddess of Enlightenment. Here the seer aspires to attain that spiritual world of immortality beyond this triple world of mortal beings which is limited by physical, vital and mental consciousness.

Eighth Mantra:

This Mantra is a prayer of an earnest soul aspiring for the delight of immortal life.

देवीं वाचमिति मन्त्रस्य भार्गव ऋषिः । त्रिष्टुप् छन्दः । सरस्वती देवता । सौरिति बीजशक्तिकीलकम् । मन्त्रेण न्यासः ।।२७।।

'Devi Vacham' is the Mantra. Bhargava is the seer. Tristubh is the metre; Sarasvati is the deity; 'Sauh' is the mystical syllable and active power of the Mantra; consecration (of limbs of the body) is through the Mantra. (27)

व्यक्ताव्यक्तगिर: सर्वे वेदाद्या व्याहरन्ति याम् ।
सर्वकामदुधा धेनु: सा मां पातु सरस्वती ।।२८।।

She, whom all the Vedas and others declare (Vyaharanti) in manifested (articulated or objective) and unmanifested (unarticulated or subjective) speech (Gir), who is full of light of consciousness (Dhenu) fulfilling all the aspirations (of the soul for Godward journey) (Sarva Kama Dudha), may, She, divine Sarasvati protect me. (28)

सौ: देवीं वाचमजनयन्त देवास्तां विश्वरूपा: पशवो वदन्ति।
सा नो मन्द्रेषमूर्जे दुहाना धेनुर्वागस्मानुप सुष्टुतैतु।।२९।।

Sauh, the Goddess Vak (unmanifested sound or the power of Sabda Brahman), whom the gods proclaim (attained in the form of Riks); whom the beings (Pashava) of all forms express (speak), may, She, the creative Goddess Vak, light of consciousness (here symbolically spoken of as cow), excellently praised (Sushtu), come to us, granting (Duhana) delight of immortal existence and vigour of mortal existence (Mandreshmoorje). (29)

This Sukta is taken from Rig-Veda Samhita (8.100.11). According to the translation rendered by Sayanacharya, the seer of this Mantra prays for sweetmeats and drink, which is totally out of context. In the Rig-Veda the cow is the symbol of light, Truth-consciousness, illumination and knowledge. The gods discovering that light in the form of Riks could become one with that light, and thus they are called the shining ones. According to Vedic Rishis, this Truth-consciousness liberates the mortal life from all limitations and grants delight of immortal life. The Goddess Sarasvati who is the power of supreme consciousness is also known as the Goddess Vak (Vagdevata). She creates Truth – consciousness in our thoughts and grants supreme felicity of immortal existence and not sweetmeats and drink for sustaining this mortal existence. It is the descent of this Truth-consciousness which provides the vigour for mortal existence.

Ninth Mantra:

उत त्व इति मन्त्रस्य बृहस्पति ऋषिः । त्रिष्टुप् छन्दः । सरस्वती देवता । संमिति बीजशक्तिकीलकम् । मन्त्रेण न्यासः ।।३०।।

'Uta Tvah' is the Mantra. Brihspati is the seer. Tristubh is the metre; Sarasvati is the deity; 'Sam' is the mystical syllable and active power of the Mantra; consecration (of limbs of the body) is through the Mantra. (30)

यां विदित्वाखिलं बन्धं निर्मथ्याखिलवर्त्मना ।
योगी याति परं स्थानं सा मां पातु सरस्वती ।।३१।।

Knowing whom all the bondages are obliterated, (the goal of) all paths through which a Yogi proceeds to the supreme abode (of immortality), may, She, divine Sarasvati protect me. (31)

सं उत त्वः पश्यन्न ददर्श वाचमुत त्वः श्रृण्वन्न श्रृणोत्येनाम् ।
उतो त्वस्मै तन्वं विसस्त्रे जायेव पत्य उशती सुवासाः ।।३२।।

Sam, though seeing, one does not behold (being unaware of transcendental nature of the Goddess), though hearing speech (Riks in objective form), one does not hear (does not understand the profound secrecy of the supreme ether). To one (who understands the secret of the Vedas) She does reveal Herself, as does a well-dressed (Suvasa) consort (Jaya) presents herself to her beloved lord. (32)

This Mantra is a part of Sukta 71 of Mandala 10 of Rig-Veda Samhita (10.71.4). The Goddess Sarasvati dwells in the sound and She is the embodiment of speech. The potency of speech and sound is infused in the Mantras or 'Riks' of the Vedas. The deity is said to be present in these Mantras and by chanting these Mantras we can make the deity manifest. However, in this Sukta, Brihaspati Angiras says that though hearing and seeing the Goddess 'Vak' in the name and form of Riks, one may not understand the nature of the Goddess inspite of learning all the Mantras if one has not understood the nature of supreme ether where all the Riks abide. It is only by knowing this source of all the 'Riks' that one becomes a seer of the Vedas. In one who thus knows the secret of the Vedas, the Goddess Sarasvati is ever manifested.

In Sukta (10.71) of Rig-Veda Samhita, the seer emphasises the importance of intuition in understanding the true import of the Vedas. Only those who lead a life of chastity can awaken this intuitive power through the grace of Goddess Sarasvati. Scholars who merely know the Suktas (verses) with its factual or logical meanings are unaware of the true import of the Vedas. Since the language is symbolic and poetical, its secret and true inner meaning is not revealed to every body. Those scholars, who seek name and fame by merely knowing the Riks of the Vedas, fail to understand its true inner meaning and they derive no real benefit from the Vedas. The same view has also been expressed by sage Dirghtma Uchathyaputra in the Rig-Veda Samhita (1.164.39) wherein he says:

ऋचो अक्षरे परमे व्योमन् यस्मिन्देवा अधि विश्वे निषुदः ।
यस्तं न वेद किमृचा करिष्यति य इत्तद्विदुस्त इमे समासते ।।

"The Riks abide in the imperishable (Akshar) supreme ether (Param Vyoman) in which (Adhi) resides (Nishad) all the gods (Deva Viswe); what will he do (Kim Karisyati) with the Riks (by merely chanting and knowing its meaning) who has not known (Na Veda) that (supreme ether)? but those who know that (Tadvid), they merge in (Samasat-attain) the supreme (abode of gods)." Therefore, those who have no devotion to Truth do not derive the real benefit from the Vedas. Their self-complacency prevents them to understand the true inner meaning of the Vedas. It is only those, to whom the Goddess Vak reveals the true inner meaning of the Vedas attain the supreme state of Brahman. Thus those people who profess Vedic Religion and inculcate Vedic ideals are high or low according to their spiritual capacity. The Vedas are impartial in their teachings.

Tenth Mantra:

अम्बितम इति मन्त्रस्य गृत्समद ऋषिः । अनुष्टुप् छन्दः । सरस्वती देवता । ऐमिति बीजशक्तिकीलकम् । मन्त्रेण न्यासः ।।३३।।

'Ambitame' is the Mantra. Gritsmada is the seer. Anustup is the metre; Sarasvati is the deity; 'Aim' is the mystical syllable and active power of the Mantra; consecration (of limbs of the body) is through the Mantra. (33)

नामरूपात्मकं सर्वं यस्यामावेश्य तां पुनः ।
ध्यायन्ति ब्रह्मरूपैका सा मां पातु सरस्वती ।।३४।।

She, who is the manifestation of all names and forms, into whom they merge again, of whom (the wise seers) meditate in form of non-dual Brahman, may, She, divine Sarasvati protect me. (34)

ऐं अम्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वती ।
अप्रशस्ता इव स्मसि प्रशस्तिमम्ब नस्कृधि ।।३५।।

Aim, O Sarasvati, the noblest virgin mother, the best of rivers (stream of supreme consciousness), the most divine Goddess, we are, as it were, insignificant (without reputation or devoid of Truth-consciousness) beings; O Mother, grant us, Self-expression (glorious divine nature). (35)

This Mantra is taken from Rig-Veda Samhita (2.41.16). Here the seer, Gritsmada Angiras, prays to the Goddess Sarasvati for illumination of the soul in order to attain the divine nature. This illumination of the soul is like a new birth (Praja) for the seekers of knowledge. The seer in the next Mantra of Rig-Veda Samhita (2.41.17) aspires for this new soul formation or a new birth in the spiritual world. However, those who are not yet initiated into this secret knowledge, translate Praja as progeny. They consider the seers of the Vedas as mere mortal beings who prayed to their primitive gods for food, drink, progeny, wealth, name and fame. However, those who have an insight will immediately find a rational and sensible spiritual meaning behind the veil of the symbolic language of the Vedas. They will find that the seers of the Vedas were men of wisdom and not men of superstitions.

देवताप्रार्थना
Prayer for invoking the Goddess

The sages now sing hymns in praises of Goddess Sarasvati in order to invoke Her blessings. The text and language of the following verses show that these hymns were composed much later after Rig-Vedic Era.

चतुर्मुखमुखाम्भोजवनहंसवधूर्मम ।
मानसे रमतां नित्यं सर्वशुक्ला सरस्वती ।।३६।।

The power or energy (Vadhu) of universal spirit (symbolised as Swan) full of pure white colour light (Sarva Sukla), amidst the cluster (Vana) of four faces (Chaturmukh - symbolising the knowledge of four Vedas), with beaming lotus face (Mukha Ambhoj), may, the Goddess Sarasvati, always dwell in my mind. (36)

The Goddess Sarasvati is the Jnana Shakti (Power of Wisdom) of non-dual Brahman. Since this power of wisdom is absolutely pure, She is described here as white and dazzling. She has a form of pure white light who dispels the darkness of ignorance. Clad in spotless white, seated on the white lotus, wearing ornaments of pearls and white crystals gems, holding a crystal white rosary, riding on a white swan, and radiating light, the Goddess Sarasvati personifies purity and immortality. This verse describes Her as the five faced Goddess which represents Her Mahasarasvati aspect who dwells in the minds of all noble people. Sages pray to Goddess Sarasvati to dwell in their minds so that their ignorance is eradicated leading to divine knowledge.

नमस्ते शारदे देवि काश्मीरपुरवासिनि ।
त्वामहं प्रार्थये नित्यं विद्यादानं च देहि मे ।।३७।।

Prostration to Thee, O Goddess Sharada, dweller of the city of Kashmir, I always pray to you grant me the gift of Vidya (enlightenment). (37)

Sharada is the name of a particular form of the Goddess Sarasvati. Once upon a time Kashmir was considered to be the highest seat of learning. There is stated to be a temple of Goddess Sharada with a throne of omniscience inside it. Only a person who had attained enlightenment and a state of omniscience could ascend this throne. Vidya is that which brings about illumination of the soul. This inner illumination or enlightenment grants freedom to the Soul. Thus it is said, *"Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye"*- Vidya is that which liberates. This Vidya includes both Apara Vidya (lower or mental or secular knowledge) and Parȧ Vidya (Brahma Vidya, higher or super-conscious realisation). The Vedas call Goddess Sarasvati as Trayi Vidya. Trayi means protector. Thus the Goddess Sarasvati protects the devotee by bestowing both Para and Apara Vidya.

अक्षसूत्राङ्कुशधरा पाश पुस्तकधारिणी ।
मुक्ताहारसमायुक्ता वाचि तिष्ठतु मे सदा ।।३८।।

O Goddess, holding in Thy hands the string of beads (symbol of mystical knowledge), the goad (symbol of stimulating noble thoughts), the noose (symbol of control over mind), the book (symbol of secular knowledge), wearing the necklace of pearls (symbol of purity), Thou ever dwell in my speech. (38)

The Goddess Sarasvati is the personification of all knowledge like arts, science, music, poetry, etc. She has been depicted here as holding Akshasutra (Mala or rosary), Ankusha (goad), Pasa (noose) and Pustaka (book) in Her four arms. Her four arms symbolises Her sovereign power over the creation. The rosary symbolises spiritual or mystical science acquired through spiritual practices like meditation, Japa, etc. The book symbolises Secular knowledge or material science. She holds a rosary in the right hand and a book in the left hand which symbolises that Spiritual knowledge is superior to Secular knowledge. The goad symbolises that the Goddess is the awakener of noble thoughts in the mind of the devotee. She sets the mind of the devotee free from animal instincts and thus helps in mind restraint. The noose symbolises the control which She exercises over the mind and the vital forces for the evolution of the soul.

कम्बुकण्ठी सुताम्रोष्ठी सर्वाभरणभूषिता ।
महासरस्वती देवी जिह्वाग्रे संनिवेश्यताम् ।।३९।।

Thy neck (Kantha) like a conch (Kambu- with three marks on the shell like neck indicative of good fortune), Thy beautiful deep red (Tamra) lips (Oshthi), Thou adorned with all kinds of jewels, O great Goddess Sarasvati, (thus) reside on the tip of my tongue. (39)

In this hymn Sarasvati is invoked as the *Goddess of Fortune* who bestows upon the devotee goodness, purity, holiness and perfection. The Sages plead the Goddess to dwell on the tongue tip because it is responsible for the harsh or polite speech which is the main cause of bringing repute or disrepute to a person. This is a prayer to the Goddess to bless everyone with truthful and polite speech because it is through sacred words that a person earns great merits and good fortune.

या श्रद्धा धारणा मेधा वाग्देवी विधिवल्लभा ।
भक्तजिह्वाग्रसदना शमादिगुणदायिनी ।।४०।।

O Goddess of speech, beloved of Brahma, Thou bestow faith, concentration, (and) intelligence (understanding); Thy home is the tongue-tip of a devout soul; Thou bestow virtues like mind restraint, etc. (40)

The Goddess of speech being the creative consciousness of non-dual Brahman exists in the form of creative sound. Because of Her this entire universe comes into the manifested form of Hiranyagarbha (Brahma). In this act of creation She supports Lord Brahma and thus She has been described as the beloved of the Lord Brahma. That devout soul who seeks only the Truth by giving up ego and falsehood, the Goddess resides in his mind and speech bestowing virtues like faith, firmness, intelligence, etc. His words are the gems of Truth. Worship of the Goddess sharpens the mental and intellectual faculties of the devotee and grants clear understanding. Clarity and purity in thought and speech is the first sign of Her blessing.

नमामि यामिनीनाथलेखाऽलंकृतकुन्तलाम् ।
भवानीं भवसंतापनिर्वापणसुधानदीम् ।।४१।।

Obeisance to Thee, O Bhavani; Thy hair locks (Kuntala) are decorated with the crescent moon (Lekha) of Lord Shankara, the master of senses (Yamini Nath); Thou are the stream of nectar (Sudha Nadi) that destroys the afflictions of the world.(41)

यः कवित्वं निरातङ्कं भुक्तिमुक्ती चा वाञ्छति ।
सोऽभ्यर्च्यैनां दशश्लोक्या नित्यं स्तौति सरस्वतीम् ।।४२।।

Whosoever desires faultless poetic skill, bliss of truth - existence (Bhukti-bliss of Savikalpa state) and liberation (Mukti-immortality of Nirvikalpa state), he should regularly worship by glorifying the Goddess Sarasvati with these ten verses. (42)

Constant prayer to the Goddess Sarasvati with the above ten verses purifies the mind and the intellect. One becomes established in the Truth and whatever words one utters becomes poetry to the world. He

experiences the bliss of Savikalpa state (Bhukti) and immortality of Nirvikalpa state (Mukti). One attains the supreme felicity of eternal life. In this aspect Sarasvati is the *Goddess of Supreme Felicity.*

तस्यैवं स्तुवतो नित्यं समभ्यर्च्य सरस्वतीम् ।
भक्तिश्रद्धाऽभियुक्तस्य षण्मासात् प्रत्ययो भवेत् ।।४३।।

He, who thus constantly extols and worships the Goddess Sarasvati; to him, who is endowed with faith and devotion, proof (direct knowledge) comes within six months. (43)

Those aspirants, who give up vain pursuit of wealth and fame and regularly worship the Goddess Sarasvati seeking only the Truth, attain the grace of the Goddess within six months. The Goddess bestows upon them peace of the Soul and reveals the true nature of Brahman. This direct knowledge of Truth is the ultimate proof of eternal life.

ततः प्रवर्तते वाणी स्वेच्छया ललिताक्षरा ।
गद्यपद्यात्मकैः शब्दैरप्रमेयैर्विवक्षितैः ।।४४।।
अश्रुतो बुध्यते ग्रन्थः प्रायः सारस्वतः कविः ।

From him issues forth Sarasvati spontaneously, elegant words, prose and poetry comprising sounds of unfathomable import (not mentioned explicitly). The poet, whose deity is the Goddess Sarasvati, naturally comprehends the unheard texts. (44-45)

Another name of the Goddess Sarasvati is Pratibha Shakti (Intuitive Power) who bestows the power to know the secret knowledge. A poet, who understands the secret of the Goddess Sarasvati, comes to know of those texts which he has never heard of during his lifetime. These texts reside in the ether of causal space and are normally referred to as *Akasha Lipi (etheric text).* With the benediction of the Goddess Sarasvati, he derives this secret knowledge which is the source of all mystical knowledge. He thus attains a status of omniscience. He alone is a true poet who has this mystical knowledge. Medha Suktam (Mahanarayana Upanishad) also glorifies the Goddess Sarasvati thus: "O Goddess! favoured by Thee, one becomes a seer; by Thee one attains Brahman."

Purusha and Prakriti- The dual aspects of the Goddess:

Greatly pleased with the invocations, the great Goddess Sarasvati manifests there in Her ethereal effulgent form and reveals Her true nature to the sages.

इत्येवं निश्चयं विप्राः सा होवाच सरस्वती ।।४५।।

Pleased with the invocations of the sages, the Goddess Sarasvati spoke (revealed the knowledge of Self) thus: (45)

आत्मविद्या मया लब्धा ब्रह्मणैव सनातनी ।
ब्रह्मत्वं मे सदा नित्यं सच्चिदानन्दरूपतः ।।४६।।

Even Brahma obtained the eternal Self-knowledge through Me, being ever of the form of Being-Awareness-Bliss, I am the eternal principle of Brahman. (46)

प्रकृतित्वं ततः स्पृष्टं सत्त्वादिगुणसाम्यतः ।
सत्यामाभाति चिच्छाया दर्पणे प्रतिबिम्बवत् ।।४७।।

Thereupon I became the Prakriti (primordial matter) by harmonising (Samyam) inherent characteristic constituents (Guna) like Sattva, etc., in Me is reflected the Chit (consciousness) like an image in the mirror. (47)

Prakriti, the creatrix, is the primordial substance or matter which is neither a product of Brahman nor a real entity apart from Brahman. Gunas are the characteristic constituents which are inherent in Prakriti. These are referred to as Sattva (intelligence, consciousness or awareness), Rajas (swift motion of elemental particles) and Tamas (inertia of matter). These Gunas are not qualities different from the substance, but are one with the substance and hence these are known as inherent characteristic constituents of Prakriti. In the absolute state of Brahman, the three Gunas are totally absent. In the primordial state of unmanifested Prakriti, these three constituents lie in latent form. This Prakriti evolves into the manifested form through the creative power of Chit or consciousness which is but a reflection of Brahman. Then through combinations of these three constituents, the entire

creation of multitudes comes into existence.

तेन चित्प्रतिबिम्बेन त्रिविधा भाति सा पुनः ।
प्रकृत्यवच्छिन्नतया पुरुषत्वं पुनश्च मे ।।४८।।

Through that reflection of Chit, Prakriti shines three fold again; and again separate from Prakriti, I am (also) the Purusha. (48)

Prakriti is said to be three fold, viz., gross (definite or objective form), subtle (imperceptible or subjective form) and causal (transcendental form of consciousness) corresponding to three Gunas of Tamas, Rajas and Sattva. Purusha is said to be super causal because it is beyond Prakriti. The next three verses describe the appearance of Maya and Iswara in non-dual Brahman.

The Goddess is Iswara due to Maya:

Brahman is beginningless and endless (Anadi-Anantam) and hence known as eternal. The next three verses describe the relationship between Maya and Iswara. Maya is the Process of Becoming which is a Conscious Process. However, Maya derives its sentience from Brahman. In association with this Maya Shakti, Brahman appears as Iswara. It is Iswara who guides and controls Maya in the entire creative process. The Goddess, who is the eternal principle of Brahman, appears as Iswara due to the effect of the Maya.

शुद्धसत्वप्रधानायां मायायां बिम्बितो ह्यजः ।
सत्वप्रधाना प्रकृतिर्मायेति प्रतिपाद्यते ।।४९।।

In the Maya which is predominated by Pure Sattva (consciousness), is reflected the eternal (unborn); Sattva dominated Prakriti itself is known as Maya. (49)

When there is predominance of Sattva (pure consciousness) among the characteristic constituents of the Prakriti, it is called Maya. Maya is the process of Becoming in which all matter, energy and sound exist in an undifferentiated or Avyakta state. The whole of creation lies in Maya in a seed-state during cosmic dissolution. This Maya is the Material Cause of the universe. However, this Process of Becoming

needs some Efficient Cause to Will and to control the creation. The next two verses mention that Iswara who is the reflection of Brahman in Maya, is the inner controller of the process of becoming. He is the efficient cause of the creation.

सा माया स्ववशोपाधिः सर्वज्ञस्येश्वरस्य हि ।
वश्यमायत्वमेकत्वं सर्वज्ञत्वं च तस्य तु ।।५०।।

That Maya is the appearance, subordinate to omniscient Iswara; for Lordship over Maya, oneness and omniscience belongs to Him (Iswara) alone. (50)

Svetasvatra Upanishad (4.10) says: 'know Maya as Prakriti and Brahman associated with Maya as the great Iswara'. This Maya is the causal body of Iswara and under His control. Iswara is the efficient cause of the universe who guides Maya in the entire creative process. Iswara is called omniscient because Brahman as pure spirit has no creation and hence no cognition of it.

सात्त्विकत्वात् समष्टित्वात् साक्षित्वाज्जगतामपि ।
जगत् कर्तुमकर्तुं वा चान्यथा कर्तुमीशते ।
यः स ईश्वर इत्युक्तः सर्वज्ञत्वादिभिर्गुणैः ।।५१।।

He, who is of the nature of Sattva (consciousness), Samasti (collectiveness), Sakshi (witness) of the universe; who holds the power to make or unmake or otherwise create universe; is the Lord of the universe having virtues like omniscience, etc. (51)

Dual nature of Maya:

The previous three verses describe the appearance of Iswara in non-dual Brahman who is the efficient cause of the universe. The next five verses describe the world of duality created by Iswara and Jiva who are but the different appearances of Brahman because of Maya.

शक्तिद्वयं हि मायाया विक्षेपा वृतिरूपकम् ।
विक्षेप शक्तिर्लिङ्गादि ब्रह्माण्डन्तं जगत् सृजेत् ।।५२।।

Maya has the dual potencies of projection (Vikshepa) and

concealment (Avritti). The power of projection creates the entire subtle universe (or Hiranyagarbha) and the gross universe (or Viraaj). (52)

During cosmic dissolution (vide verse 47), the three characteristic constituents, viz., Sattva, Rajas and Tamas exist in equilibrium state. Because of reflection of Brahman in this equilibrium state, Sattva dominated Prakriti emerges concealing all the fundamental particles in an unmanifested form (vide verse 49). The Will power of Iswara starts the action of *Vikshepa Shakti*. This is Rajas dominated Prakriti where space and time emerge because of the fast motion of fundamental particles under the force of Projecting power (*Vikshepa Shakti*). This movement generates strong and weak nuclear forces which creates gross and subtle worlds through various combinations. In Vedanta, the projecting power is said to be preceded by the veiling power. However, here it has been described in the reverse order. The next verse shows the effect of the veiling power under the influence of Tamas or inertia. This power veils the non-dual reality and creates clear distinctions between the seer and the seen and Brahman and the universe.

अन्तर्दृग्दृश्ययोर्भेदं बहिश्च ब्रह्मसर्गयोः ।
आवृणोत्यपरा शक्तिः सा संसारस्य कारणम् ।।५३।।

The other (Apara), veiling power, which differentiates (Bheda) internally (Antah) between the seer and the seen (Drik-Drashya), and externally between Brahman and the universe (Brahma- Sargayo), is the cause of the universe. (53)

According to Vedanta philosophy, Brahman is everything (*Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahma*). For a Brahma Jnani there is no real creation of the universe. Brahman alone appears as the manifold phenomenal universe because of Maya. The veiling power of Maya conceals the real non-dual Brahman and then presents an appearance of the objective universe through Projecting Power. This is the fundamental difference between the Vedanta philosophy and the philosophy of followers of Sankhya, Yoga, Vaisheshika, Buddhism, etc., who believe in the multiplicity of the creation.

Because of Maya, the witness Self (Brahman) becomes conscious of

the cosmic causal body and identifies Himself with the totality of the souls. In this causal state He is called Iswara, the indwelling spirit. He guides Maya from within in the manifestation of the subtle cosmic body (Hiranyagarbha) and subsequently in the manifestation of the gross cosmic body (Viraj). Thus at the objective plane (externally) this universe appears to be real and independent of Brahman. At the subjective plane (internally) this Maya creates a differentiation of the Seer from the seen in the mind because of which the soul identifies itself with the subtle body giving rise to individuality to the souls.

The next verse describes the superimposition of Jiva on the witness Self who considers itself as the doer or enjoyer in association with the gross body and thus thinks itself under bondage and undergoing transmigration.

साक्षिणः पुरतो भातं लिङ्गदेहेन संयुतम् ।
चितिच्छायासमावेशाज्जीवः स्यात् व्यावहारिकः ।।५४।।

The subtle body (Lingam), appearing in close proximity (Purtah) with the witness consciousness (Sakshin), becomes empirical embodied self (Jiva) by associating (Sayuntam) itself with the gross body (Deha) on account of superimposition of reflection of the Chit (consciousness). (54)

The next verse shows that the idea of Jiva and Universe are falsely superimposed on the witness Self.

अस्य जीवत्वमारोपात् साक्षिण्यप्यवभासते ।
आवृतौ तु विनिष्टायां भेदे भातेऽपयाति तत् ।।५५।।
तथा सर्गब्रह्मणोश्च भेदमावृत्य तिष्ठति ।

Superimposition of Jivahood (on Atma) appears even in the Witness consciousness; (this) differentiation of appearance (of the Jiva in Atma) also ceases once veiling (power) is destroyed. Similarly is the veiling of Brahman through creation of multitudes. (55-56)

या शक्तिस्तद्वशाद्ब्रह्म विकृतत्वेन भासते ।।५६।।
अत्राप्यावृतिनाशे न विभाति ब्रह्मसर्गयोः ।
भेदस्तयोर्विकारः स्यात् सर्गे न ब्रह्मणि क्वचित् ।।५७।।

Brahman appears mutable because of subservience to the creative power (Shakti). Here, again, the difference between Brahman and the universe disappears once the veiling power is destroyed. Their difference due to mutation lies in the creation and never in Brahman. (56-57)

The above six verses describes the delusion created by the power of Maya. Maya which has dual nature of projection and concealment is in Brahman. It limits the indivisible nature of Brahman and makes It appear as the world (object of enjoyment) and the embodied being (enjoyer). It is because of Maya that Jiva and Iswara appear to have different forms. Secondly because of Maya this universe appears to be real and different from Brahman. Thirdly because of Maya even Brahman appears to be mutable. The followers of philosophies of Vaisheshika, Sankhya and Yoga hold the view that liberation is attained when the witness (detached) nature of the Atman is known. But it is impossible to establish the detached nature of Atma as long as the world and Iswara are believed to be real and ever existing entities. Freedom of Atma from all attachment is possible only through the knowledge of non-duality. Thus the fundamental real principle is non-duality and the highest goal of life is the realisation of non-duality. Now therefore, commences the prescription for realisation of non-duality by overcoming Maya.

Prescription of Samadhi for realisation of non-duality:

The great Goddess of Knowledge having bestowed the purity of mind and intellect, now shows the ways to overcome this dual nature of Maya and realise one's own true nature as Brahman.

It is only a pure mind, free from all impressions of the world, which can remain absorbed in its own true nature. That Samadhi which follows after purity of the mind is the chief means for realisation of non-dual Brahman. Samadhi can be effective in the realisation of non-duality only if all the impressions are effaced from the mind. Therefore, follows the prescription of effacement of all worldly impressions associated with name and form.

अस्ति भाति प्रियं रूपं नाम चेत्यंशपञ्चकम् ।
आद्यं त्रयं ब्रह्मरूपं जगद्रूपं ततो द्वयम् ।।५८।।

There are indeed five factors viz. Asti (Existence), Bhati (Effulgence), Priyam (Benevolence), Rupam (Form) and Nama (Name). The first three belong to Brahman and the other two constitute the world. (58)

Every entity has five characteristics. The first three, viz., Asti, Bhati and Priyam corresponding to Sat, Chit and Ananda are present in all entities being one with the Brahman. The other two, viz., name and form make one entity differ from another. These two constitute the world of multiplicity.

It is not enough if one has faith in non-duality. One must cast aside all names and forms which constitute multiplicity and constantly practice Samadhi in order to enliven the faith.

उपेक्ष्य नामरूपे द्वे सच्चिदानन्दतत्परः ।
समाधिं सर्वदा कुर्याद्धृदये वाऽथ वा बहिः ।।५९।।

Discarding the two, viz. name and form be intent on the Sat (Asti), Chit (Bhati), Ananda (Priyam); always practice Samadhi (uninterrupted meditation) within the heart or without. (59)

Shrutis like 'That Atman is 'not this, not this' (Neti, Neti)" negate all names and forms. This state of negation does not imply 'nothingness' or 'void' but refers to a state of 'witness' or Atma. This negation of all names and forms through Yoga (Samadhi in the heart) or intellectual discrimination (of the Self from non-Self) leads to a state of witness whose nature is Sat, Chit and Ananda. One should constantly practice meditation on these three permanent aspects of Brahman. This type of Samadhi is called Bheda-Samadhi since here names and forms are rejected and the idea of Ast-Bhati-Priyam is assimilated.

The next six verses describe the two types of Samadhi, viz., Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa that should be practiced by the seekers of Truth of non-duality. Savikalpa is again described here as twofold.

सविकल्पो निर्विकल्पः समाधिर्द्विविधो हृदि ।
दृश्यशब्दानुभेदेन सविकल्पः पुनर्द्विधा ।।६०।।

Savikalpa (with attributes) and Nirvikalpa (without attributes) are the

two types of Samadhi practiced in the heart: that Savikalpa is again twofold according to it (observing consciousness in the Samadhi) being associated with the Drisya (object) or the Sabda (subjective sound or thought). (60)

In Savikalpa Samadhi threefold consciousness of knower, knowledge and known is not completely effaced from the intellect. Here the intellect remains in a latent state being identified with the causal body. This Savikalpa is an initial state of Samadhi which becomes mature in the Nirvikalpa state. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi the threefold consciousness of knower, knowledge and known is completely eliminated and the function of the intellect ceases completely. Here the mind becomes one with the super causal body.

In Savikalpa Samadhi, diversifying faculties of the intellect become inoperative by realising the witness Self (subject) as different from the seen (object). Here the witness Self is perceived as pervading all objects. Alternatively the illumined intellect can negate all superimpositions on the Self in the realm of pure consciousness and remain detached from all the attributes. This Samadhi is always associated with luminous discriminative ideas like "I am detached", etc., which is of the nature of illumined thoughts. These pure and luminous thoughts originate from the subtle *(Pashyanti)* and super fine grade (*Para)* of sound *(Sabda)*.

कामाद्याश्चित्तगा दृश्यास्तत्साक्षित्वेन चेतनम् ।
ध्यायेदृश्यानुविद्धोऽयं समाधिः सविकल्पकः ।।६१।।

Desires, etc.(Kamadhya), are objects that belong to the mind (Chittaga), practice of meditation on Consciousness as their witness (Tat Sakshitvena) is Savikalpa Samadhi conforming (Anuvidh) to the objects. (61)

In this type of Savikalpa Samadhi the intellect becomes passive to all desires as these desires are the objects of the mind. It is the mind that hankers after the objects of desire and not the consciousness. When the soul enters into the increasing depth of consciousness in the heart through extreme dispassion, it goes beyond the desire-mind. The soul then becomes a witness of all the desires of the mind. Here all the desires are considered as objects different from the true nature of the

being.

असङ्गः सच्चिदानन्दः स्वप्रभो द्वैतवर्जितः ।
अस्मीतिशब्दविद्धोयं समाधिः सविकल्पकः ।।६२।।

'I am free from worldly desires', '(I am) of the nature of Being – Awareness – Bliss', '(I am) Self-effulgent', '(I am) bereft of duality', etc. - is (the discipline of) Savikalpa Samadhi conforming to subjective sound. (62)

In this type of Samadhi, the intellect becomes passive to the sense perception by the power of discriminative knowledge. When the soul recedes into the increasing depth of the heart, it hears the subjective sound through supra sensory faculties. The soul then gets immersed in this super fine grade of sound and derives bliss being free from the limitations of the thought-mind. Here the Sadhaka enters into the Samadhi through the efficacy of the sharp discriminative knowledge and identifies himself with the subject or pure consciousness. This plane of pure consciousness unfolds the infinite wisdom of Prajnana.

स्वानुभूतिरसावेशाद्दृश्यशब्दावुपेक्षितुः ।
निर्विकल्पसमाधिः स्यान्निवातस्थितदीपवत् ।।६३।।

But (Tu) by becoming indifferent (Upekshy) to objects and sounds on account of complete absorption (Avesa) in the bliss (Rasa) of realisation of the Self (Sva-Anubhuti), the mind remains (Syat) steady in Nirvikalpa Samadhi like (unflickering flame of) a lamp (Dipavat) in windless place (Nivat Sthita). (63)

When the mind gives up all the ideas of object and subject, it enters into Nirvikalpa state on account of the complete absorption in the bliss of the Self. Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the culmination of constant practice of Savikalpa Samadhi. The Bhagavad Gita (6.11) also compares the mind of such a Yogi, who constantly practices Samadhi, with the unflickering flame of a lamp in a windless spot. This Samadhi is the result of extreme dispassion (Vairagya) and sharp discrimination (Viveka).

हृदि वा बाह्यदेशेऽपि यस्मिन् कस्मिंश्च वस्तुनि ।
समाधिराद्यः सन्मात्रान्नामरूपपृथक्कृतिः ।।६४।।

Like (Savikalpa Samadhi) within the heart, (twofold Savikalpa) Samadhi can also be practiced with the help of any external object by separating (discriminating) name and form from the pure being. (64)

Yoga philosophy prescribes Samadhi within the heart through an eightfold discipline (*Astanga Yoga*) while Sankhya (knowledge) philosophy emphasizes discrimination of Purusha (the pure being) from Prakriti for attainment of a state beyond mind. The Upanishads have delineated many Vidyas for meditation. Just as a Yogi attains *Sahaja* (natural) Samadhi by placing the Praana in the *Sushumna Nadi,* similarly a Jnani lives in Samadhi by practicing concentration on the Sat-Chit-Ananda aspect of an entity. He perceives only the real substance of an entity and not its name and form. Both the paths lead to the same goal of an illumined state of the mind.

स्तब्धीभावो रसास्वादात् तृतीयः पूर्ववन्मतः ।
एतैः समाधिभिः षड्भिर्नयेत् कालं निरन्तरम् ।।६५।।

The aforesaid third Nirvikalpa or thoughtless state is attained when mind becomes extinct (Stabdha) because of experience of supreme bliss; one should constantly spend (Nayat) the time in these six types of Samadhis (for attaining liberation). (65)

Super-conscious state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi is attained by constantly seeing all in the Self and the Self in all. The mind of a Jnani merges in the Self and ultimately realises that everything is Self. Patanjali Yoga Aphorism (I.14) also emphasises the constant practice for restraint of the mind.

The goal of the individual soul is freedom from the slavery of the mind and its thoughts. This Upanishad recommends six types of Samadhi for this end. When the meditation on the attributeless Self is matured it leads to Savikalpa Samadhi which in turn culminates in Nirvikalpa Samadhi of no-mind (*Nirodha*) state. In this state all interest in sense objects is completely erased from the mind and it merges with the Self alone. The mind being bereft of all desires attains liberation.

Realisation of the supreme Self:

देहभिमाने गलिते विज्ञाते परमात्मनि ।
यत्र यत्र मनो तत्र तत्र परामृतम् ।।६६।।

With the effacement of ego in the body and realisation of the supreme Self, wherever the mind may rest there it experiences supreme nectar of immortality. (66)

The Self is different from the gross, subtle and causal bodies. However, this difference should not create a sense of reality of the body. The Self is said to be different from the body only to illustrate the transient nature of the body and not for proving the duality of the Self and the body. The Self is the substratum of all names and forms and thus they are nothing but illusory. It is present in every form yet It transcends them all. Thus the idea of the pervaded and the pervading is also illusory. The highest realisation is that where one perceives no differences of any kind in the Self. It is a state where all becomes one with the Self ("All this is Atma"- Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, IV.v.7). When one realises all as identified with the Atman, there arises neither delusion nor sorrow for such a seer of unity (Isa Upanishad, 7). The mind of that seer of unity experiences supreme bliss of immortal life under all circumstances.

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे ।।६७।।

The knot of the heart (desires clinging to one's heart) is rent asunder, all doubts are obliterated; all Karmas (three types of Karma viz., Prarabdha, Sanchita and Agaami) are annihilated, when the Self which is both the higher and the lower, is realised (perceived). (67)

This Sloka is also found in the Mundaka Upanishad (2.2.8) which shows the efficacy of the supreme knowledge that ensues from the realisation of the attributeless Self. This Self has to be realised in Its fullness everywhere both as lower (manifested) and higher (transcendental). In the highest state of realisation all differentiations like lower & higher, interior & exterior, etc., cease to exist. Therefore, the next Sloka mentions that even the differentiation of Jiva and

Iswara is illusory. The mind of a Self-realised seer has nothing to accept or reject and hence no doubt ever arises in him. Here the world 'all Karmas' is used in a plural sense which shows that after realisation of the Self even Prarabdha Karma ceases to exist.

मयि जीवत्वमीशत्वं कल्पितं वस्तुतो न हि ।
इति यस्तु विजानाति स मुक्तो नात्र संशयः ।।
इत्युपनिषत् ।।६८।।

State of Jiva (individual soul) and Iswara (Super soul) are all imagination (of mind) and do not exist in reality in Me. He, who knows this Truth, is verily free - there is not even the least doubt in this. Thus is the Upanishad. (68)

This may be said to be the ultimate conclusion of this Upanishad. Having revealed the power of omniscience of Iswara and the nature of Maya, the Great Goddess finally refutes any differentiation of Iswara and Jiva in non-dual Brahman. The Shruti (Taittiriya Upanishad II.7) also says that he is fear stricken who makes the slightest distinction between the Jivatma (Individual Self) and the Paramatma (Supreme Self).

The Svetasvatara Upanishad (4.9 & 18) in order to elucidate the glory of the imperishable Self says that the Lord of Maya (Iswara) creates the universe while Jiva is controlled by Maya. However, this imperishable Self is worthy of being adored even by the creator who is the highest being conceivable from our relative point of view. Those who have not realised the non-dual Self are seen to be deluded by false knowledge and frequently quarrel over the superiority and inferiority of Iswara and Jiva, which are creations of Maya. Therefore the seekers of liberation should never engage themselves in disputations about the nature of Jiva and Iswara. They should constantly practice discrimination and realise the non-dual Self which is both the higher and the lower. Liberation is nothing but being established in one's own Self.

ॐ तत् सत्



अमृतबिन्दूपनिषत्
(AMRITABINDU UPANISHAD)*

* The Upanishad imparting droplets of immortality

अमृतबिन्दूपनिषत्
AMRITABINDU UPANISHAD

Introduction:

This Upanishad belonging to Krishna Yajurveda is the twentieth among the 108 Upanishads. This Upanishad is known by two names, viz. Amritabindu and Brahmabindu, meaning 'droplet of nectar' or 'droplet of Brahman'. This Upanishad deals with the intuitive realisation of identity of Brahman and the individual Self by restraining the mind (Mano-Nirodha). Liberation depends on the restraint of the mind and on nothing else. Charity, worship, philanthropic works, service to parents, pilgrimages, austerity, and knowledge of the various branches of the Vedas dealing with rituals - all these are useless to an aspirant who has not restrained his mind. This Upanishad brings a synthesis of Jnana and Yoga to attain the absolute non-dual state. The teachings of this Upanishad are very rationalistic and scientific.

Shanti Mantra

ॐ सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु । मा विद्विषावहै ।।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।।

May (Brahman) protect us both (the teacher and disciple). May (Brahman) be pleased with us both. May we work together with vigour. May our study be illuminating. May we not hate each other.
Om ! Peace ! Peace ! Peace!

The Mind: Cause of Bondage & Liberation

मनो हि द्विविधं प्रोक्तं शुद्धं चाशुद्धमेव च ।
अशुद्धं कामसंकल्पं शुद्धं कामविवर्जितम् ।।१।।

The mind is mainly (apart from other divisions) said to be twofold, pure and impure. The impure mind is that which hankers after objects of desire, and the pure mind is that which is free from desire. (1)

There are various states of mind like super mind, illumined mind, over mind etc. but here it has been classified as existing in two·states, viz. pure and impure.

मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः ।
बन्धाय विषयासक्तं मुक्तं निर्विषयं स्मृतम् ।।२।।

The mind alone is the cause of bondage and liberation of human beings; when engrossed in sense-objects (mind leads) to bondage; when released from sense- objects (mind leads) to liberation. So they (the wise) think. (2)

Liberation in Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga is gradual and dependent on God. The main aim of Karma and Bhakti is the purification of the mind which in due course of time grants relative immortality in Brahmaloka. Liberation in Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga is Sadyo-Mukti, liberation here and now. Jnana Yoga affirms that liberation can never be the result of any Karma (action) or Upasana (worship). Muktikopanishad clarifies that the four types of liberations referred to in Bhakti Yoga, viz. Salokya, Samipya, Sarupya and Sayujya are not real and only Kaivalya is absolute liberation. This absolute liberation is attainable through the knowledge of the Upanishads alone and not through Karma, Rituals, Sankhya, Yoga or Worship.

Raja Yoga believes that liberation follows the 'no-mind' state. In Jnana Yoga, liberation follows the destruction of ignorance that veils the eternal nature of Self. Raja Yogi and Jnana Yogi are Self-dependent for liberation. Mind is the cause of Ahankar (ego) and Mamkar (attachment) leading to the bondage of an individual. When a person has attained the 'no-mind' state by withdrawing mind from sense-objects, then even though he does not desire liberation, he attains it.

यतो निर्विषयस्यास्य मनसो मुक्तिरिष्यते ।
अतो निर्विषयं नित्यं मनः कार्यं मुमुक्षुणा ।।३।।

Since liberation is ensured to this mind (when) free from desire for sense-objects, therefore, seekers of liberation should constantly strive for eradication of all desires from the mind. (3)

Jnana Yoga coupled with renunciation affirms that liberation is the result of the state of absolute desirelessness and not the outcome of any worship (Upasana) to some external God. Upasana may be purifying to an aspirant but its purpose is not the attainment of the state of desirelessness. It is still an extrovert path (Pravritti Marga) which seeks prosperity. The contention of some ignorant people that one attains liberation even without knowledge when all the results of actions are exhausted after enjoyment, is not validated because the Shruti says "Never does desire cease by enjoyment of the object of desire. As fire by fuels, so also enjoyments further intensify desires." Manu Smariti (ii, 94)

निरस्तविषयासङ्गं संनिरूद्धं मनो हृदि ।
यदा यात्यात्मनो भावं तदा तत् परमं पदम् ।।४।।

When the mind, with its all desires for sense-objects eradicated, is well restrained in the heart and thus attains the state of Atmanhood, then it is the supreme state. (4)

When the mind gets convinced about the sole reality of Atma and the unreality of the rest through Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (detachment) then it stops brooding upon sense-objects and attains a state of non-existence. Being restrained in that thoughtless state, the mind attains dissolution in the Atma alone. This is the state of Mano-Nirodha in which the mind remains identified with Atman alone. Mano-Nirodha is said to be the supreme religious act. We read in Mahabharata (12.242.4) thus "The highest austerity is in the one-pointedness of the mind and senses. It is superior to all religions; it is called greatest of all religions".

Yoga: Prescriptions for Mano-Nirodha

How long should one practise Mano-Nirodha? The Upanishad seeks to clarify this doubt.

तावदेव निरोद्धव्यं यावद्धृदि गतं क्षयम् ।
एतद् ज्ञानं च ध्यानं च शेषो ऽन्यनश्च विस्तरः ।।५।।

The mind should be restrained so long till it dissolves in the heart.

This is Jnana (Self-Realisation) and this is Dhyana (meditation); the rest is mere argumentation and verbosity. (5)

A Yogi restrains the mind with the firm conviction that nothing else exists apart from Atma and nothing ever originated out of this Atman. Being one with that consciousness, the Yogi attains intuitive realisation of Atman. Subjugation of the mind is possible only if the Yogi overcomes the four obstacles in Samadhi viz. Vikshepa (distraction due to sense-object), Laya (dull state or dreaming state), Kshaya (fall of consciousness due to the drag of latent impulses) and Rasasvada (self-complacent state of the mind with lower type of bliss attained in Samadhi). The mind in the state of Nirodha leading to Samadhi is different from the Sushupti state. In the Sushupti state the mind gets resolved into its primal cause along with all its latent impressions (Vasanas), while in the Nirodha state mind is restrained by virtue of its discriminative knowledge. The Yogi attains knowledge of Atman that shines forth in the state of Samadhi. Thus this Nirodha state is said to be meditation as well as knowledge. The rest scriptural deliberation is only for argumentation and serves no purpose in liberation.

The above verse is very profound in its meaning because it sets forth the goal of all spiritual practices. The one who enters in this heart through Samadhi becomes *Aptakama* (he who has got all his desires fulfilled), *Praptaprapya* (one who has attained whatever is to be attained), *Kritakritya* (one who has done whatever is to be done). There remains nothing to be known.

नैव चिन्त्यं न चाचिन्त्यं न चिन्त्यं चिन्त्यमेव तत् ।
पक्षपातविनिर्मुक्तं ब्रह्म सम्पद्यते तदा ।।६।।

(This state) should never be contemplated (as external to one's own Self); nor should it be averse to contemplation (as Self); nor should it be contemplated (as qualified); but should be contemplated (as existing in Its fullness everywhere); that Brahman which is free from all partiality is attained in that state. (6)

That state in which the mind abides in the heart, should never be imagined as fixing the mind on some entity beyond this material universe. The space present in the heart is called causal space

(*Chidakasha*) and it permeates material space (*Bhutakasha*) as well as mental space (*Chittakasha*). In an individual it exists as a size of a thumb. Hence this state should not be considered as external to one's own Self. Further one should not become averse to contemplation on the Self, knowing it to be incomprehensible through the mind, because Katha Upanishad (II.i.11) says that through the mind alone it should be attained. It should not be contemplated on as qualified either. Contemplation on Saguna Brahman with name and form presupposes the triple consciousness of Dhyata, Dheya and Dhayana. It should be contemplated on without any partiality as exclusive and yet all inclusive (in Vedantic terminology it is said as immanent and instantaneously transcendent). Mundaka Upanishad (II.ii.7) mentions that the Self Who is omniscient in general and all knowing in particular should be realised as existing in Its fullness everywhere possessing absolute bliss and immortality.

स्वरेण संधयेद्योगमस्वरं भावयेत् परम् ।
अस्वरणानु भावेन भावो वाऽभाव इष्यते ॥७॥

One should practice Yoga with sound (Nada of Pranava); then meditate on the Supreme Brahman beyond sound. Finally by the realisation of beyond sound (Nada), the non-being is perceived as being. (7)

Pranava Upasana that involves uttering of the sacred syllable AUM, is considered as the synthesis of Upasana (worship) and Jnana (knowledge) and prescribed for those Jnana Yogis who have not yet attained an advanced stage but want to contemplate on non-qualified Brahman. Pranava Upasana employs the power of sound (Nada) to captivate the mind and make it one pointed. Mandukya Upanishad mentions that the three principle letters of Pranava ("AUM") represent the three states of consciousness, viz. objective, subjective and transcendental. The unarticulated sound (Ardha-Matra or fourth letter) represents the fourth state of Turiya or super-consciousness. One, who practises Yoga (involving sense and mind control through Yama, Niyama, etc.) with Pranava, his mind gradually, finds repose in the subtle sound. This subtle sound is related to ether. As long as there is sound, so long does ether and mind persist. When sound (Nada of the three principle letters of Pranava) ceases there comes the quiescent state where the mind ceases to exist. Nada-Bindu Upanishad mentions

that by the constant application of Nada of Pranava the mind becomes free from all impressions. Then the mind and vital airs get merged in the Atman (fourth state of consciousness). With this one attains the all-witnessing state of being which at first appeared as non-being.

Jnana: Identity of Self and Brahman

Having stipulated Yoga for Mano-Nirodha (restraint of mind), now Jnana is being set forth for establishing the identity of Self and Brahman. Yoga for Mano-Nirodha is necessary but not a sufficient condition for liberation. Mind becomes extinct only if it sees the Self everywhere and attains identity with the Self through non-dual knowledge. We find conflicting views among the various dualistic systems of philosophy like Nyaya, Vaishesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Buddhism and Jainism because of different methodologies adopted therein. They stand by their own conclusions and are at war among themselves and whosoever opposes them. The secular system of materialists is still worse because there is a no concept of eternal life and it is antagonistic to any spiritual view of life. But the view of the Upanishad is holistic and all encompassing. The central theme of all the Upanishads is to prove that individual Self is essentially Brahman without any birth and death but because of Avidya (or Maya) it appears as if undergoing birth and death. Liberation results from the identity of Self and Brahman when this Avidya is destroyed through knowledge. This is the philosophy of Non-duality. The Shruti says "*Advaita Darshnam Jnanam*" - Non-duality is perfect knowledge. This philosophy of Non-duality entertains no grudge or conflict with any system of philosophy. It accepts both empirical (*Vyavaharik*) as well as illusory (*Pratibhasik*) views under their respective domains and then underlines the fundamental reality of absolute (*Parmarthik*) Brahman. The philosophy of Nihilist is invalid from the point of this absolute reality. This Upanishad now seeks to establish the highest Truth with the help of the Doctrine of Non-Separation.

तदेव निष्कलं ब्रह्म निर्विकल्पं निरञ्जनम् ।
तदब्रह्माहमिति ज्ञात्वा ब्रह्म संपद्यते ध्रुवम् ।।८।।

That alone is undifferentiated (non-qualified) Brahman which is ever pure and without thought. One verily becomes immutable Brahman by realising "I am that Brahman". (8)

The philosophy of Non-duality affirms that the whole phenomenal existence is nothing but Brahman. Because of Maya it appears as differentiated but in reality it is absolute. The Upanishad refutes the contention of the dualist that if the whole creation is Brahman then it must become sinful and tainted because of sins committed by individuals. Brahman is the unrelated witness of everything and is not tainted by anything. It is transcendental and ever pure. The Katha Upanishad (II.ii.11) declares "He being transcendental is not tainted by the sorrows of the world." Brahman does not think by thought process of the mind, rather, He pervades the thought of the mind. The mind functions because of the light of Brahman. Brahman is subtler than the mind and hence He never comes in contact with the mind or thought. The Upanishad thus seeks to establish the immutable and imperishable nature of Brahman by proving that Brahman is the innermost fundamental entity. Such an entity alone can be eternal. Liberation is assured for him who knows this Brahma Vidya through identity with Brahman.

निर्विकल्पमनन्तं च हेतुदृष्टान्तवर्जितम् ।
अप्रमेयमनादिं च यद् ज्ञात्वा मुच्यते बुधः ।।९।।

(Brahman is) beyond thought and infinite, beyond reason and analogy, boundless extensive (immeasurable), causeless; knowing which, a wise man becomes free from all fetters. (9)

Brahman cannot become the object of thought because He is thinker of thought. "You cannot think that Who is the thinker of thought" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, III.iv.2). Further, the Kena Upanishad says "That which is not thought of by the mind, that by which, they say, the mind is pervaded, know that to be Brahman and not this that people worship as an object" (Kena Up., I.6). Brahman is incomprehensible through the mind and hence His existence cannot be established through reason and analogy. Though one can try to explain the nature of Brahman to incompetent aspirants through reason and analogy by drawing a similarity with boundless space, Brahman pervades even space (ether). "By this Immutable Brahman, O Gargi, is the unmanifested ether pervaded." (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, III.viii.11) Since Brahman is the most fundamental entity, He is causeless and self-existing.

The above two Slokas present the central theme of all the Upanishads. The final verdict of Vedanta is that the Jiva (individual) and the universe are in reality nothing but Brahman. This leads us to the doctrine of non-separation as explained in the next Sloka.

न निरोधो न चोत्पत्तिर्न बद्धो न च साधकः ।
न मुमुक्षुर्न वै मुक्त इत्येषा परमार्थता ।।१०।।

There is neither dissolution of the mind nor its origination; none is bound and none is engaged in penance; none is seeker of knowledge and none is ever liberated: this is the supreme Truth. (10)

Because of a dualistic outlook there is a false appearance of the Jiva being under bondage or liberated. The prescription of dissolution of the mind applies to such false appearances. From the stand point of non-duality, everything is birthless Self. The Katha Upanishad (I.ii.18) says, "Self did not originate from anything, nor did anything originate from Self." The individual being is never separated from Brahman and hence the merger of the individual in the universal absolute is superfluous. This doctrine may appear horrifying to a dualist but the view of a dualist regarding liberation is also not free from defects because rebirth is still possible in a so called liberated state.

Oneness of Atman

एक एवाऽऽत्मा मन्तव्यो जाग्रत् स्वप्न सुषुप्तिषु ।
स्थानत्रयव्यतीतस्य पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ।।११।।

One Atman alone should be admitted in the (three) states of wakefulness, dreaming and dreamless sleep. For him who has transcended the three states (and has attained the fourth state of super consciousness or Turiya) there is no more rebirth. (11)

The goal of a Yogi is to perceive one Self in all the states. He keeps himself awake in that Self through constant deliberation on the Self. When Yogi identifies himself with the witness of all the three states of Jagrat, Svapana and Sushupti, he attains the fourth state of Turiya. This Yoga is very difficult to practice for those who perceive the Selves differently and run after them because of a fault in character.

The Katha Upanishad (II.i.11) says, "He goes from death to death who sees any diversity in this Self." This is the definite conclusion of Vedanta.

The next few Slokas use an analogy to validate the oneness of Atman in all beings. The use of analogy is also a method to elucidate the intricate nature of a hypothesis which makes it simple to understand.

एक एव हि भूतात्मा भूते भूते व्यवस्थितः ।
एकधा बहुधा चैव दृश्यते जलचन्द्रवत् ।।१२।।

There is only one Atman in all beings dwelling variously in different beings. Though one, It is seen as many, like the (reflection of) moon in the water. (12)

घटसंवृतमाकाशं नीयमाने घटे यथा ।
घटो नीयेत नाऽऽकाशं तथा जीवो नभोपमः ।।१३।।

Just as space enclosed in a jar does not change when the jar is carried (from place to place) or the jar is broken, similarly the Jiva resembles the space (and remains untouched inspite of the Linga Sarira traversing various regions and the repeated destruction of the body). (13)

घटवद्विविधाकारं भिद्यमानं पुनः पुनः ।
तद्भग्न न च जानाति स जानाति च नित्यशः ।।१४।।

When jars of different forms (or shapes) are split again and again, the space (enclosed by each jar) does not know that it is broken but it always knows (itself as all-pervasive without destruction, similarly the Jiva is all-knowing ever unborn and undecaying). (14)

शब्दमायावृतो नैव तमसा याति पुष्करे ।
भिन्ने तमसि चैकत्वमेक एवानुपश्यति ।।१५।।

Enveloped by the illusion of sound (name and form through which the phenomenal universe is perceived) one does not perceive Atman just as one does not see a blue lotus flower in darkness. When darkness (illusion) is dispelled (wise one) sees only the oneness (of Atman). (15)

Seekers who dispel illusion (Maya) through discriminative knowledge they become firm in that reality and realise oneness of Self. The Katha Upanishad (II.ii.12) says, "There is only one ruler - inner Self in all beings that makes a single form multifarious."

Intuitive Knowledge and Absolute Non-Duality

Having set forth Yoga and Jnana, this Upanishad finally insists for the intuitive realisation of absolute non-duality by delineating two types of knowledge.

शब्दाक्षरं परं ब्रह्म तस्मिन् क्षीणे यदक्षरम् ।
तद्विद्वानक्षरं ध्यायेद्यदीच्छेच्छान्तिमात्मनः ।।१६।।

The mystic syllable 'Om' (should be first meditated as) the supreme Brahman. After the waning of that syllable Om (sound of three letters A U and M and humming sound has also receded and merged into the fourth state of Turiya) that imperishable Brahman (remains beyond Nada, Bindu and Kala). The wise should meditate on that imperishable Brahman, if he desires peace of his soul. (16)

Nadabindu Upanishad mentions that Nada has four Matras comprising of A,U,M and Ardha-Matra of Omkara. Bindu (Iswara) is the speck of all Matras where the mind is said to be in the Unmani state (over mind). The four Matras are subdivided into twelve with each having three Svaras (intonation), viz. Udatta, Anudatta and Svarita. These are said to be twelve Kalas known by means of Dharana. Parabrahman (supreme Brahman) is beyond all these Matras.

Parabrahman is the eternal being who is the soul of all souls and the sentience of all sentient beings. Those who meditate on Him, attain peace. The Katha Upanishad (II.ii.12 & 13) says, "Those resolute seekers who realise Him in their hearts, to them belongs eternal peace and to none else. Those who seek the eternal among the ephemeral, consciousness amidst conscious, and one in many, to them belongs eternal peace unto none else."

द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये तु शब्दब्रह्म परं च यत् ।
शब्दब्रह्मणि निष्णातः परं ब्रह्माधिगच्छति ।।१७।।

Sabda Brahman (Qualified Brahman or Apara Vidya) and Supreme Brahman (Non-Qualified Brahman or Para Vidya) are the two kinds of Vidya (knowledge) that are to be acquired. Having mastered the Sabda Brahman one arrives at Supreme Brahman. (17)

Mundaka Upanishad (I.i.5) mentions that Apara Vidya comprises of the Vedas including the syllable Om, Vyahritis (intonation), Angas (auxiliary sciences), Upavedas (minor Vedas), code of rituals, grammar, etymology, metre and astrology. Para Vidya is related to imperishable Brahman and this is revealed through the Upanishads alone. Seekers of Truth having acquired the theoretical knowledge from books should intuitively experience the Supreme Brahman.

ग्रन्थमभ्यस्य मेधावी ज्ञानविज्ञानतत्परः ।
पलालमिव धन्यार्थी त्यजेद्ग्रन्थमशेषतः ।।१८।।

Having studied the texts (various branches of Vedas), the wise one solely intent on acquiring Jnana (discriminative knowledge based on reason derived with the instrument of the mind) and Vijnana (discriminative knowledge based on intuition derived with the instrument of consciousness) should entirely abandon the texts, like the one who desiring rice discards the husk. (18)

गवामनेकवर्णानां क्षीरस्याप्येकवर्णता ।
क्षीरवत्पश्यते ज्ञानं लिङ्गिनस्तु गवां यथा ।।१९।।

Cows of various colours have milk of one colour only. (The wise one) views the discriminative knowledge (acquired from Vedas) as milk and the many branches of Vedas as cows. (19)

घृतमिव पयसि निगूढं भूते भूते वसति विज्ञानम् ।
सततं मन्थयितव्यं मनसा मन्थानभूतेन ।।२०।।

Vijnana (consciousness) dwells in all beings as latent like the butter in milk. (One should) constantly churn (reflect on that knowledge) with the churning stick of the mind. (20)

ज्ञाननेत्रं समादाय उद्धरेद्वह्निवत्परम् ।
निष्कलं निश्चलं शान्तं तद्ब्रह्माहमिति स्मृतम् ।।२१।।

With the help of the vision of knowledge one should awaken (up to) Supreme Brahman as (one would kindle) sacrificial fire (by stirring up the wood). I am that indivisible, resolute and tranquil Brahman, thus it has been taught. (21)

सर्वभूताधिवासं यद् भूतेषु च वसत्यपि ।
सर्वानुग्राहकत्वेन तदस्म्यहं वासुदेवस्तदस्म्यहं वासुदेव इति ।।२२।।

He, in Whom all beings dwell, and Who dwells in all beings, bestowing (His) grace on all, that self-luminous soul of the universe (or supreme being) I am, that self-luminous soul of the universe I am. (22)

The final culmination of intuitive knowledge is absolute identity with the universal soul. The realisation that Self is in all beings and all beings are in the Self bestows final emancipation. "The illusory, unreal universe is non-existent. I alone am the actual Hari. I alone am the Sadasiva (the ever auspicious). I am of the nature of pure consciousness." (Tejobindu Upanishad, VI.63 & 64). This is the ultimate experience of a Videha Mukta.

ॐ तत् सत्

निरालम्बोपनिषत्
(NIRALAMBOPANISHAD)*

* Upanishad delineating teachings that bestow independence

निरालम्बोपनिषत्

(NIRALAMBOPANISHAD)

This Upanishad, forming part of Sukla–Yajur Veda, is thirty fourth among the 108 Upanishads. As the name suggests, this Upanishad inculcates those valuable teachings which make the sincere seeker of knowledge independent of all supports. This Upanishad raises those questions which are normally taught by the preceptor to his disciple. This Upanishad is meant for those seekers who have not received formal initiation under any Guru because of some misfortune. This Upanishad commences its exposition after paying homage to the Lord Siva who is the divine preceptor of all beings and thus fulfilling the necessary condition of being initiated by the Guru. Those who study this Upanishad will receive initiation under Lord Siva Himself and such initiation will destroy all misfortunes of the earnest seekers.

Shanti Mantra:

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ।।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।।

Om,That (absolute unconditioned Brahman) is infinite, and this (conditioned Brahman or universe) is infinite. The infinite (universe) proceeds from infinite (Brahman). (Then), realising the infinitude of the infinite (universe), it remains as the infinite (Brahman) alone.
Om ! Peace! Peace! Peace!

Initiation under the Divine Preceptor:

ॐ नमः शिवाय गुरवे सच्चिदानन्दमूर्तये । निष्प्रपञ्चाय शान्ताय निरालम्बाय तेजसे ।।
निरालम्बं समाश्रित्य सालम्बं विजहाति यः । स संन्यासी च योगी च कैवल्यं पदमश्नुते ।
एषामज्ञानजन्तूनां समस्तारिष्टशान्तये । यद्यद्बोद्धव्यमखिलं तदाशंक्य ब्रवीम्यहम् ।।१।।

Aum, reverential salutations to the Lord Siva, the divine preceptor, who is the embodiment of Sat (being)-Chit (awareness)-Ananda (bliss), devoid of worldly activities, ever tranquil, independent and Self-effulgent. He, who takes refuge in this independent Lord, becomes master in all the supportive means (of salvation). He

becomes a renunciant and a Yogi and attains the state of Kaivalya. This knowledge destroys all misfortunes (*Aristha*) of the beings. I shall raise and answer all that must be known (to all the seekers of liberation). (1)

Enquiry for destroying ignorance:

किं ब्रह्म । क ईश्वरः । को जीवः । का प्रकृतिः । कः परमात्मा । को ब्रह्मा । को विष्णुः । को रुद्रः । क इन्द्रः । कः शमनः । कः सूर्यः । कश्चन्द्रः । के सुराः । के असुराः । के पिशाचाः । के मनुष्याः । का स्त्रियः । के पश्वादयः । किं स्थावरं । के ब्रह्मणादयः । का जातिः । किं कर्म । किमकर्म । किं ज्ञानं । किमज्ञानं । किं सुखं । किं दुःखं । कः स्वर्गः । को नरकः । को बन्धः । को मोक्षः । क उपास्यः । कः शिष्यः । को विद्वान । को मूढः । किमासुरं । किं तपः । किं परमं पदं । किं ग्राह्यं । किमग्राह्यं । कः सन्यासीत्याशकांयाह ।।२।।

What is Brahman? Who is Iswara? Who is Jiva? What is Prakriti? Who is Paramatma? Who is Brahma? Who is Vishnu? Who is Rudra? Who is Indra? Who is Saman? Who is Surya? What is Chandra? Who are the gods? Who are the demons? Who are the evil sprits? Who are men? Who are women? Who are animal and the like? What is inanimate state? Who are the Brahmanas, etc.? What is caste? What is action? What is inaction? What is knowledge? What is ignorance? What is pleasure? What is pain? What is heaven? What is hell? What is bondage? What is liberation? Who is to be worshipped? Who is the disciple? Who is the wise? Who is the stupid? What is the demoniac? What is penance? What is the supreme state? What is to be accepted? What is to be rejected? Who is the renunciant?(2)

This Upanishad puts forth these forty one questions in order to clarify the doubts of aspirants so that they do not get misled by heretical doctrines of various schools of thought. This Upanishad now answers the above questions in seriatim.

Deliberation on Brahman:

स होवाच महदहंकारपृथिव्यप्तेजोवाय्वाकाशत्वेन बृहद्रूपेणाण्डकोशेन कर्मज्ञानार्थरूपतया भासमानमद्वितीयमखिलोपाधिविनिर्मुक्तं तत्सकलशक्त्युप- बृंहितमनाद्यनन्तं शुद्धं शिवं शान्तं निर्गुणमित्यादिवाच्यमनिर्वाच्यं चैतन्यं ब्रह्म ।।३।।

He (Brahman) is said to be non-dual and free from all adjuncts. He appears (*Bhasamana*) as macrocosm consisting of (*Tven*) cosmic intelligence (*Mahat*), I-Consciousness (*Ahankar*) and the five elements viz., solid matter (*Prithivi*), molten plasma (*Apah*), light and heat radiation (*Tejo*), energy (*Vayu*), and ether (*Akasha*) whose form (*Roop*) reveals (*Taya*) the true import (*Artha*) of all righteous actions (*Karma*) and knowledge (*Jnana*). He is vast (*Brihat*) possessing all powers (*Shakal Shakti*); without beginning and end (*Na-Aadi Anantam*). He is said to be (*Vachya*) ever pure (*Suddham*), auspicious (*Shivam*), tranquil (*Santham*), attributeless (*Nirgunam*), etc. Brahman is incomprehensible (*Anirvachya*) Universal Soul or Spirit (*Chaitnyam*). (3)

This Upanishad describes the two aspects of Brahman viz, absolute and qualified. Absolute Brahman is attributeless, indescribable and incomprehensible. However, this should not lead us to a state of void as postulated by Nihilists. Immature intellect cannot comprehend this Absolute. He is beyond the ken of the rationalist. Those who cling to sense perception for rational and logical proof of the absolute Brahman, turn atheist. The Svetasvatara Upanishad (IV.20) says that Brahman can be known through intuition alone and not through sense perceptions. The Taittiriya Upanishad says that non-existence verily he becomes who thinks this Brahman to be non-existent. Therefore, to save such doubting souls from falling into a state of oblivion and perdition, this Upanishad describes the nature of qualified Brahman with attributes. Qualified Brahman in the form of cosmic intelligence brings forth the creation of multitudes. It is He who makes Karma and Jnana yield their results in their appointed time.

Iswara - The Inner Ruler:

ईश्वर इति च ब्रह्मैव स्वशक्तिं प्रकृत्यधभिधेयामाश्रित्य लोकान्सृष्ट्वा प्रविश्यान्तर्यामित्वेन ब्रह्मदीनां बुद्धीन्द्रियनियन्तृत्वादीश्वरः ।।४।।

Iswara is verily Brahman, who in association (Ashritya) with His Self-manifesting powers (Swa-Shakti) named (Abhi-dheya) as Prakriti, creates the universe and enters (Pravisha) (into it) as the inner ruler (Antaryamin) of Brahma, etc. Iswara is so spoken (Vadi) as He controls (Niyantryati) the intellect and the senses. (4)

The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (III.7.3-23) deliberates in detail on *Antaryamin Vidya.* Iswara has no body of His own. Iswara is so named as he is the inner ruler of all. He inhabits various entities like the earth, water, fire, inter-space, air, heaven, sun, moon, stars, ether, living beings, etc. He is not these entities but is within them whom these entities do not know. The body or organs of the deities associated with these entities serve as His body and He impels them to perform their respective works.

The Mandukya Upanishad mentions that Brahman is ever everything who is neither aware of internal nor external nor conscious of both. It is incomprehensible and identified with the fourth state of *Turiya.* Brahman is to be known through negation of everything. Therefore, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad describes the Absolute through the *Doctrine of Neti-Neti* (not this-not this). However, Iswara is the Omniscient Lord of all and identified with the third state of *Prajna.* He is the source of origination and dissolution of all beings. He is described through positive attributes. Therefore, the Taittiriya Upanishad describes Iswara through the *Doctrine of Iti-Iti (This is Brahman-This is Brahman).*

This Upanishad presents both the formful (personal) and formless (impersonal) aspects of God. Therefore, the wise seekers of Truth should not entertain any doubt about the existence of God and should reject all heterodox doctrines of materialists and atheists.

Deliberation on the nature of Jiva:

जीव इति च ब्रह्मविष्ण्वीशानेन्द्रादीनां नामरूपद्वारा स्थूलोऽहमिति मिथ्याध्यासवशाज्जीवः ।
सोऽहमेकोऽपि देहारम्भकभेदवशाद्बहुजीवः ।।५।।

The Jiva (embodied soul) is He (Iswara) who due to (identifications with the) names and forms of Brahma, Vishnu, Isana, Indra, etc., through false superimpositions (Mithya Adhyas) affirms (Vasa) - 'I am the gross cosmic body' (Sthool-Aham-Iti). (The Viraat Purusha thinks:) 'Though I am one, due to the differences in the causes of origin of the body (Deha-Arambh-Bheda)), the Jiva are many.' (5)

Iswara by entering the cosmic causal body as the inner ruler of everything and coming in close proximity with the subtle cosmic body of Brahma, Vishnu, etc. appears as the Viraat Purusha (gross cosmic body) because of 'I-Consciousness' or Aham. Possessed of this Aham He thinks, 'though I am one alone, due to the differences in the causes (Karmas of different souls) which give rise to the gross bodies, the Jivas are many.' Thus the Jiva though identical with Iswara, is subjugated by the false superimpositions of the names and forms and considers itself different from Iswara. Various theistic philosophies like those of Vaisheshika, Nyaya, Sankhya, Yoga, etc., who believe in the plurality of the souls are under the illusion of Jiva and Iswara. Therefore, the wise seekers of Truth should give up this illusion of Jiva and Iswara and should constantly abide in the non-dual Self. The Taittiriya Upanishad (II.vii.1) also warns thus, "यदा ह्यवैष एतस्मिन्नुदरमन्तरं कुरुते अथ तस्य भयं भवति - The one, who makes the slightest difference in Brahman (like Jiva and Iswara), is fear-stricken."

Prakriti -The Imperceptible Primordial Matter:

प्रकृतिरिति च ब्रह्मणः सकाशान्नानाविचित्रजगन्निर्माणसामर्थ्यबुद्धिरूपा ब्रह्मशक्तिरेव प्रकृतिः ।।६।।

Prakriti, the imperceptible primordial matter, is verily the power of Brahman (Brahma Shakti) which is of the nature of intellect (Cosmic Intelligence) and capable (Samarthya) of creating (Nirmana) various (Nana) wonderful worlds (Vichitra Jagat) from the existence of (Sakasat) Absolute Brahman. (6)

Prakriti is the Maya Shakti of Brahman. It is predominated by Pure Sattva (Cosmic Intelligence) wherein all the cosmic forces rest in equilibrium. This Prakriti is also called the imperceptible primordial matter. Modern Physics has proved that at this sub-atomic level matter and energy are interchangeable. It is from this Prakriti that the subtle (Hiranyagarbha) and gross (Viraat) forms of the universe are born. It is said to be the causal body of the Iswara. In Vedanta, Prakriti is not considered as an independent and insentient entity like that of Sankhya Philosophy. Prakriti derives its sentience from Iswara or pure consciousness. Iswara guides and controls the Prakriti in the entire

creative process. Intellect or Buddhi emerges from this Prakriti which discriminates between Purusha (Brahman) and Prakriti.

Nature of Paramatma:

परमात्मेति च देहादेः परतरत्वात् ब्रह्मैव परमात्मा ।।७।।

The Super Soul (Supreme Self) is identified with (Tvat) Brahman alone being superior to (Paratara) the bodies, etc. (7)

The Supreme Self is superior to gross, subtle and causal cosmic bodies in the macrocosm as well as in microcosm. Therefore, He is referred to as super causal body. The super soul is identical with the absolute Brahman.

स ब्रह्मा स विष्णुः स इन्द्रः स शमनः स सूर्यः स चन्द्रस्ते सुरास्ते असुरास्ते पिशाचास्ते मनुष्यास्ताः स्त्रियस्ते पश्वादयस्तत्स्थावरं ते ब्रह्मणादयः ।।८।। सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म नेह नानास्ति किंचन ।।९।।

Brahman is Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, Samana (god of death), Surya, Chandra, demi-gods, demons, Pisacha (evil spirits), men, women, animals (Pasu), etc; the inanimate objects (like plant, mineral) the Brahmana, etc. All this is verily Brahman; here there is no (Na Iha) diversity (Nana) in the least (Kinchan). (9)

This Upanishad reaffirms the great declaration of the Chandogya Upanishad (III.14.1) that all this is verily Brahman (सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म). Brahman is ever non-dual and unchangeable. Because of power of Maya, Brahman appears as manifested and many. When Brahman is realised this illusion of diversity disappears. Therefore the Shrutis deny the multiplicity in Brahman through many ways like, 'एक एव हि भूतात्मा भूते भूते व्यवस्थितः - There is only one Self dwelling in various beings', 'एको देवो बहुधा निविष्टः - One god enters into many', 'अजायमानो बहुधा विजायते – From that unborn many are born', 'एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः - One god alone is hidden in all beings', etc.

Repudiation of Caste:

जातिरिति च । न चर्मण न रक्तस्य न मांसस्य न चास्थिनः । न जातिरात्मनो जातिर्व्यवहारप्रकल्पिता ।।१०।।

Neither skin nor blood nor flesh nor bone has caste. There is no caste for the Self. Caste system is prescribed (Prakalpita) from empirical point of view. (10)

Purusha Sukta in the Rig-Veda (10.90.12) prescribes four-fold division of labour based on the inherent nature of the individuals. Those who uphold Truth through wisdom are called *Brahmain* or teaching class. Those who protect Truth through valour are called *Kshatriya* or worrier class. Those who promote Truth through creation and distribution of wealth are called *Vaishya* or trading class. Those who support Truth by providing various services are called *Shudra* or service class. Every individual voluntarily selects this division of labour based on Gunas. Purusha Sukta does not consider anybody as superior or inferior because all constitute the single body of the Purusha. Caste system based on birth is a perversion of higher ideals of the Vedic Culture which is created only from empirical point of view. This Upanishad therefore refutes this caste system based on the birth of the body.

Nature of Karma and Akarma:

कर्मेति च क्रियमाणेन्द्रियैः कर्माण्यहं करोमीत्यध्यात्मनिष्ठतया कृतं कर्मैवं कर्म ।।११।। अकर्मेति च कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वाद्यहंकारतया बन्धरूपं जन्मादिकारणं नित्यनैमित्तिकयागव्रततपोदानादिषु फलाभिसंधानं यत् तदकर्म ।।१२।।

Action performed (Kritam Karma) (with the mind and intellect) established in the Self (Atma Nistha) with the feeling 'I do the deed' that are done through the sense organs (Kriyamana Indriyah) (i.e. agency is attributed to the Atma and not to the intellect) is alone Karma or Sat Karma (true action). (11) Those actions that (Tad Karma) are associated with (Yat) the obligatory duty (Nitya), occasional duty (Naimittika), sacrifice (Yajna), religious observance (Vrata), austerity (Tapa), charity (Dana), etc. (undertaken with specific) result in view (Phal Abhi-Sabdhanam) with conceit

(Ahankar) as doer (Kritatva) and enjoyer (Bhoktritva) causing bondage and rebirth are Akarma or Asat Karma (wrong actions). (11-12)

This Upanishad categorically states that only those actions which are done without feeling of doership and enjoyership, deserves the name of *Karma* or *Sat Karma* (righteous action). On the contrary if actions are performed with certain results in view like enjoyment in this world or the next, do not deserve the name of Karma even if they are enjoined by the scriptures. Therefore such actions are to be treated as *Akarma* or *Asat Karma* (unrighteous action). This Upanishad interprets *Karma* and *Akarma* in the sense of *Sat* and *Asat Karma* while the Bhagavad-Gita interprets Karma and Akarma from the point of view of action and inaction.

Elucidation of Jnana:

ज्ञानमिति च देहेन्द्रियनिग्रह सद् गुरू उपासन श्रवणमनननिदिध्यासनै- र्यद्यद्दृग्दृश्यस्वरूपं सर्वान्तरस्थं सर्वसमं घटपटादिपदार्थमिवाविकारं विकारेषु चैतन्यं विना किंचिन्नास्तीति साक्षात्कारानुभवं ज्ञानम् ।।१३।।

Jnana is the immediate realisation (Sakshatkar) (and) intuitive experiences (Anubhavam) (derived) through sense control, reverence to the divine preceptor (Lord Siva – the Guru of all Gurus or Sat Guru), listening, internally reflecting, and profoundly meditating that there is nothing whatsoever (Kinchin Nasti) except the consciousness (Chaitanyam Bina), the innermost essence of all (Sarva-Antarstha) and the uniform principle of all (Sarva Samam) which is both the subject (Drik-seer) and object (Drishya-seen) (and) which is not subject to changes (Vikar) like pot, cloth, etc. (13)

Jnana or true knowledge is that which is related to eternal and all-pervasive divine principle called *Chaitnyam*. Secular knowledge, dealing with the material world, does not deserve the name of Jnana. According to the Upanishads true sign of knowledge is perception of unity in diversity through direct realisation that everything is Brahman. Direct realisation comes to him who follows discipline laid down by the Upanishads and not to those logicians who argue relying upon sensory perceptions. The Upanishads have delineated three steps for this immediate realisation viz., *Shravanam, Mananam* and

Nididhyasanam for the seekers of knowledge who have restrained their senses and have developed devotion to God, the Sat Guru. Shravanam is the process of listening attentively to the Upanishidic doctrines with faith. Mananam is the process of reflecting and arriving at the true import of teachings through reasoning in conformance with the Shrutis. Nididhyasanam is the process of profound meditation leading to intuitive realisation of the Self.

Nature of Ajnana:

अज्ञानमिति च रज्जौ सर्पभ्रान्तिरिवाद्वितीये सर्वानुस्यूते सर्वमये ब्रह्मणि देवतिर्यङ्नरस्थावरस्त्रीपुरूषवर्णाश्रमबन्धमोक्षोपाधिनानात्मभेदकल्पितं ज्ञानमज्ञानम् ।।१४।।

Ajnana (ignorance) is thinking of multiplicity in the non-dual (Advitiya), all-permeating (Sarvan-Syuta), and all-comprehending (Sarva-maya) Brahman (as having) various adjuncts like god (Deva), animal (Tiryang), human being (Nara), inanimate object (Sthavar), woman, man, caste (Varna), stage of life (Ashram), bondage, liberation, etc. similar to illusion of snake in the rope. (14)

Perception of multiplicity is due to fall of consciousness from the spiritual plane to material plane. Because of this spiritual fall a person identifies himself with the material body and forgets his real nature. From this comes delusion because of which a person always mistakes the duties based on caste, and attributes based on order of life, which belong to the body, as his own. From delusion arises egoism because of which a person imagines various forms like gods, man, woman, animal, etc. in non-dual Brahman. The Katha Upanishad (II.i.10) says that such a person who sees multiplicity in the Self goes from death to death. Eternal peace is for those who realise this Supreme Being, the controller and the inner Self all beings who makes single form multifarious. The Bhagavad-Gita (5.18-19) also says that a noble learned one who sees everybody with a vision of equality conquers rebirth while living in the body. While those who, though live in the midst of ignorance of multiplicity but consider themselves intelligent and learned, though bereft of good character but very proud of their secular knowledge, go revolving between birth and death and suffer misery after misery. Science and Technology are concerned with the

investigation of matter and do not seek the fundamental Truth which is spiritual. Many noble souls are getting misled by Science and Technology under the wrong impression that matter alone is the ultimate reality. For a seeker of Truth the Vedas are the refuge. The true signs of Enlightened One are unity, equality, humility and integrity. This Upanishads refutes all such different types of knowledge which do not inculcate these values. Only spiritual knowledge which reveals unity of Self is the true knowledge.

Nature of Happiness:

सुखमिति च सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपं ज्ञात्वाऽऽनन्दरूपो यः स्थितिः सैव सुखम् ।।१५।।

Happiness is the blissful state arising from the knowledge of the nature of Sat-Chit-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss). (15)

Every creature seeks happiness in life. There are some deluded exponents of secular education who seek happiness in the sense objects. Behavioural Science has failed in providing lasting happiness to its students. Consumerism in the present economic globalisation has become a threat to the happiness of the world. Inspite of maximization and equal distribution of wealth, happiness has still remained elusive in the society. Wealth is necessary only to maintain worldly and bodily dealings but does not grant happiness. Search for happiness in sense pleasures is like chasing water in the mirage. This Upanishads refutes all such views of materialism because happiness attained through these means is fleeting. Permanent happiness is the result of realisation of true nature of *Sat-Chit-Ananda.* For this a person should carefully purify the mind by giving up attachment to sense-pleasures and renouncing all desires. In fact a person with the least desire is the happiest person. Thus seekers of true happiness should not get swayed by the false doctrines of modern age.

Description of Heaven and Hell:

स्वर्ग इति च सत्संसर्गः स्वर्गः ।।१६।। नरक इति च असत्संसारविषय जनसंसर्ग एव नरकः ।।१७।।

Heaven is (a mental state which arises through) association with Sat

(Sat Sangati). Association with the people (Jana Sansarga) who are pursuing sensual pleasures related to unreal world (Asat Sansar Visaya) is hell. (17)

Brahman alone is *Sat* (true) and the rest is *Asat* (untrue). Therefore, in true sense *Satsangati* means association with Brahman. However, from empirical point of view *Satsangati* is stated to be association with those holy people who are absorbed in the contemplation of Brahman. Through *Satsangati* one develops dispassion from worldly life which destroys all delusion. Upon destruction of delusion one attains a tranquil mental state which grants happiness like heaven. On the other hand company of those people who are absorbed in worldly affairs and busy in strengthening the bonds of family life is like a hell because it leads to a mental state characterised by delusion, passion and sorrow resulting from the unfulfilled desires.

Bondage and Liberation:

Bondage and liberation is the central theme of Indian Philosophy. Men as a result of many past meritorious deeds, at the end of many lives, seek liberation and enquire about the causes of bondage. Scriptures prescribe many obligatory duties to be performed for a meaningful family and social life. These obligatory duties are binding on those who have not yet developed detachment from the world and not mandatory for the one who seeks liberation. This Upanishad is now set to refute all those Vedic injunctions which create bondage for the soul.

Causes of Bondage:

बन्ध इति च अनाद्यविद्यावासनया जातोऽहमित्यादिसंकल्पो बन्धः ।।१८।।

The common conviction (Sankalpa) that 'I am born', etc. arising due to beginningless (Anadi) latent mental impressions (Vasana) of ignorance (Avidya), is bondage. (18)

There is a firm conviction in every embodied living being that 'I am born' and that 'I have certain duty to discharge.' This view of common people is because of beginningless latent mental impressions

accumulated over many past births. These mental impressions exist in latent form in the creative consciousness of every individual being. Only a self-enquiry supplemented by detachment can destroy this endless illusion of creative consciousness.

पितृमातृसहोदरदारापत्यगृहारामक्षेत्रममतासंसारावरणसंकल्पो बन्धः ।।१९।।

Affinity (possessive attitude) towards father, mother, brother, wife, child, house, garden, field, arising due to obscuring worldly view (Sansar Avaran Sankalp), is bondage. (19)

All worldly relations are based on false corporeal existence and therefore unreal. Those who are unable to destroy the illusion of the body because of excessive desires and attachment come under the commands of various scriptures. Scriptures prescribe various methods to restrain such people from evil propensity. There are some scriptures which command such ignorant people to treat father and mother as living gods (मातृदेवो भव । पितृदेवो भव।) because they are incompetent to know that eternal god, who is unborn, undecaying, deathless, and unrelated witness of everything. The wise spiritual aspirant should not give up the eternal Truth because of emotions based on passion for the body. Smiriti for the sake of earnest seekers says thus, 'सत्यं माता ज्ञानं पिता धर्मो भ्राता दया सखाः । शान्तं पत्निः क्षमा पुत्रः षडइव सर्व बन्धुः ।। - Truth is true mother, knowledge is real father, Dharma is true brother, compassion is trusted friend, peace is devoted wife, forgiveness is the obedient son.' Kinship based on bodily relations signifies spiritual ignorance.

कर्तृत्वाद्यहंकारसंकल्पो बन्धः ।।२०।।

The view (Sankalpa) of self-esteem or ego-sense (Ahankar) in performance of action (Kartitva) is bondage. (20)

Ignorant person, not knowing his own Self, identifies himself with the body and wishes to maintain his self-esteem in the society. He perceives the world of multiplicity and prompted by desires of external world performs various actions through the body, speech and mind. He considers himself as the doer and enjoyer. Based on his likes and dislikes he accumulates merits and sins. Thus, worldly life of sorrow and joy continues unabated. Secular knowledge obstructs the vision of the Self by creating a thirst for those means that lead to

attainment of human goal comprising of wealth, wife and world. Spiritual knowledge on the other hand seeks that transcendental principle of the Self which dispenses the result of actions to all creatures according to their merits and demerits. The Katha Upanishad (II.i.2) says that non-discriminating people pursue external desires. They get entangled in the vicious circle of birth, old age and death. Therefore, the discriminating people, having realised the immortality of the Self in the impermanent body, do not seek anything in this world. The Wise One having freed himself from all the desires of the external world gives up selfish actions. He remains established in the knowledge of the Self and does not entertain any ego sense in respect of various activities of body, speech and mind. Bondage can be destroyed through Jnana (knowledge of actionless Self) and not through Karma (action).

अणिमाद्यष्टैश्वर्याशासिद्धसंकल्पो बन्धः ।।२१।।

The resolve (Sankalpa) prompted by desire (Asha) of acquiring eight types of Yogic powers (Asta Aishvarya Siddhi) like Anima (power to assume minute forms at will), etc. is bondage. (21)

A Yogi through the practice of Samyama on various things not only attains knowledge of all kinds but also occult powers and superphysical accomplishments known as Siddhis. These occult powers pertaining to superphysical worlds are considered extraordinary and may be necessary to overthrow the doctrine of materialism which believes only in materialistic interpretation of everything in life. These superphysical accomplishments give a new insight to solve the fundamental problems of life and shatter the pride of those scientists who do not believe in the divine life. A Yogi demonstrates with these Siddhis that there is a divine power which controls all the phenomena of material existence. There are eight types of Maha-Siddhis or extraordinary powers viz., *Animan, Mahiman, Laghiman, Garima, Prapti, Prakarmya, Isatva and Vasitva.* From the point of highest realisation of the Self, these extraordinary powers are called obstacles and cause bondage for the soul. The resolve to acquire Yogic Siddhis normally arises because of desires for power, name and fame. However, there are some who use these powers to alleviate the sufferings of others. Though the intention behind acquiring Siddhis may be noble, these powers only intensify worldly cravings.

Therefore, a Jivanmukta has no interest in demonstrating these powers even though possessing them.

देवमनुष्याद्युपासनाकामसंकल्पो बन्धः ।।२२।।

The wishful desire (Kama-Sankalpa) to worship gods, men, etc. is bondage. (22)

The Vedas prescribe injunctions of *Ista* (worship of Brahman through rites) and *Purtam* (construction works of social utility or altruistic works) for the human soul to overcome the obscurities and limitations of physical and vital nature. These injunctions lead the soul to heaven by purifying and widening the mental consciousness. The Lord in the Bhagavad-Gita (9.21) says that those who follow rites and duties prescribed in the three Vedas, and are desirous of pleasures of heaven, attain the state of going and returning and do not attain liberation. The Vedas prescribe various rituals (Karma) and worship (Upasana) for the purification of mind (*Citta-Shuddhi*) which facilitate the awakening of spiritual knowledge. Through knowledge alone liberation is attained. Normally worship is prompted by fulfillment of desires. These desires mislead many devotees even if their intentions are good. Therefore, the Shruti says, "देहो देवालयः प्रोक्तो जीवो देवस्सातनः । त्यजेदज्ञाननिर्माल्यं सोऽहं भावेन पूजयेत् ।। – this body is the temple of god; embodied soul is the eternal god; by giving up the garland of ignorance (like faded flowers) one should worship with the feeling 'I am He'."

The approach of the Upanishadic seers is different than that of the Vedic Rishis. In the Upanishads, worship of various gods has taken the form of quest for knowledge. Therefore the Kena Upanishad declares, "That Brahman, seek to know and not this which men worship here." The main theme before the Upanishadic seers is "कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं भवति - What is that knowing which everything becomes known?" By realising that supreme principle they became their own masters. They found all dualistic ideas like worship of gods, men, etc. as the cause of bondage. Therefore the seer of Kaivalya Upanishad proclaims, "Everything emerges from me alone; in me, everything abides; in me, everything merges. I am that non-dual Brahman"

यमाद्यष्टाङ्गयोग- संकल्पो बन्धः ।।२३।।

The determination to practise eight-fold (Astanga) Yoga like Yama, etc. is bondage (23).

Aim of Raja-Yoga is to lead the aspirant to Nirvikalpa Samadhi through Eight-fold (Astanga) Yoga. Followers of Raja-Yoga say that liberation is attained in the super-conscious state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. However, this Upanishad says that liberation cannot be attained through Raja-Yoga alone independent of the knowledge of the Upanishad. Liberation results from the realisation of non-duality while Raja Yoga does not aim at this goal. Therefore, exclusive devotion to Self alone leads to liberation and not mere performance of eight-fold Yoga.

वर्णाश्रमधर्मकर्मसंकल्पो बन्धः ।।२४।।

Performance of duties (Karma) in accordance with Varna (caste system) and Ashram (stage of life) Dharma is bondage. (24)

Varna and Ashrama Dharmas are prescribed for moral and ethical training of the beginners. These Dharmas restrain a person from the evil influence of bestial and demonic desires. These Dharmas prompt the ignorant people to perform their duties with zeal in order to attain enjoyments in heaven. They perform various duties prescribed in the scriptures thinking that fruits thereof are the goal of life and there is nothing else to be desired. However, a self-restrained person who has already become free from bestial and demonic desires has no need of desiring the fruits of Varna and Ashrama Dharmas. A wise person having known the ephemeral nature of the enjoyments in heaven gives up the desire for fruits of actions. His performance of works becomes a means for attainment of knowledge. He strives for the realisation of the Self. Having realised the Self he shakes off both his merits and sins, and being free from all flaws, attains the supreme state of equanimity. Therefore, the Lord in the Bhagavad-Gita (18.66) advises the Jnani to abandon all Dharmas and take refuge in the Self alone (सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेक शरणं व्रज). This alone can make a wise person free from all sins.

आज्ञाभयसंशयात्मगुणसंकल्पो बन्धः ।।२५।।

The notion (Sankalpa) that command (of scriptures), fear (of non-performance of duties) and doubt are the characteristics (Guna) of Atma is bondage. (25)

The school of Poorva Mimansa says that rituals have to be performed because Vedas enjoin them. This school further affirms that if these rituals are not performed it will create a new sin because of omission. Thus Mimansakas undertake rituals under the fear that if command of the Vedas is disobeyed it will lead to hell. This school is skeptical about the view that the soul is ever pure and eternally free. Such command, fear and doubt belong to the nature comprising of three Gunas and do not belong to the soul. Therefore, the Bhagavad-Gita (2.45) says, "The Vedas have three Gunas as their basis, go beyond the three Gunas. O Arjuna." The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (IV.iv.25) says, "Fearlessness indeed is Brahman." No power can ever penetrate Atma and enjoin any command on It. The Upanishad enjoins that the seeker of liberation should always meditate on the Self through *Mahavakya* like "*Aham Brahmasmi*", "*Ayam Atma Brahma*", etc. The import of the Upanishad is not to condemn the command of scriptures but to uphold the supremacy of the Soul.

यागव्रततपोदान- विधिविधानज्ञानसंकल्पो बन्धः ।।२६।।

The desire (to learn) the knowledge of rules and regulations (Vidhi-Vidhan) of sacrifice (Yajna), religious observance (Vrata), penance (Tapa), and charity (Dana) is bondage. (26)

The Bhagavad-Gita says (18.5) that sacrifice, charity, austerity and religious observances are purifying for the wise. But freedom from bondage is not attained by mere purity. Having attained purity of mind, the Wise One should discriminate between the real and the unreal and withdraw from the unreal in order to attain liberation. Therefore, the Katha Upanishad (II.11.13) says that eternal peace is for those, and not for others, who are discriminative and who realise in their hearts Him who is the eternal among the transient, and the sentience among the insentience. The true import of these Vedic injunctions is to intensify the yearning for the Truth which will culminate in the knowledge of the Self. Therefore, the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (IV.iv.22) says "Brahmanas desire to know this (Self) by the study of the Vedas, by the performance of rituals, by sacrifice,

austerity and by fasting." This Upanishad says that constant abidance in the Truth alone leads to freedom while exclusive passion for sacrifice, charity, religious observance, etc. leads to bondage because these means after all, are motivated by worldly desires.

केवलमोक्षापेक्षासंकल्पो बन्धः ।।२७।।

The notion that there is a need (Apeksha) of exclusive effort for liberation (Kevala Moksha) is bondage. (27)

Liberation is not the result of any spiritual practice. The soul is ever free, pure and eternal. Liberation is the result of this constant Self-awareness leading to constant abidance in the Self. Spiritual practices only remove false superimposition on the soul and do not add anything new to the blissful nature of the soul. The Tejobindu Upanishad (4.1-32) describes the state of one who is liberated-in-life through constant abidance in the Self. A Jivanmukta thinks thus, "I have no bondage; I have no liberation; I have no Veda; I have no religious observances like worship, pilgrimage, austerity, sacrifice, etc; I am neither a meditator nor the object of meditation nor the meditation; I have neither a teacher nor any disciple; I am only the Brahman." Thus a Jivanmukta comfortably abides in the Self of his own accord. Having firmly established in the Self he gives up all other thoughts concerning non-Self objects. Therefore, follows the next verse.

संकल्पमात्रंभवो बन्धः ।।२८।।

Bondage arises from desire (of non-Self objects) alone. (28)

Verses (18) to (28) demonstrates that all volitions and undertakings based on the non-Self entities like body and mind will ultimately lead to bondage even though these have been enjoined by the scriptures. Atmabodha Upanishad (19-23) also states various causes of bondage and enumerates the experiences of a liberated soul thus, "I have neither bondage nor liberation; no scripture, no teacher. Thought of doership has ceased. There is also no duty, family and lineage for me. These belong to the gross body, not to me different from it." Discrimination alone is the supreme means of liberation. The next verse enjoins the same for the seekers of liberation.

Liberation through Discrimination:

मोक्ष इति च नित्यानित्यवस्तुविचारादिनित्यसंसारसुख दुःखविषय समस्तक्षेत्रममताबन्धक्षयो मोक्षः ।।२९।।

Liberation is the destruction of attachments (Mamata) and fetters (Bandh) arising due to fleeting worldly pleasures and pains related to all objects (Samast Kshetra) through discrimination between eternal and transient. (29)

The fundamental proposition of all Upaṇishads is that the soul is ever free but because of attachments towards worldly objects it feels itself bound. Discrimination alone can remove this false notion. All other spiritual practices, however sacrosanct they may be, are ineffective in removing this false notion of the embodied soul.

Teacher and Disciple:

उपास्य इति च सर्वशरीरस्थचैतन्यब्रह्मप्रापको गुरुरुपास्यः ।।३०।। शिष्य इति च विद्याध्वस्तप्रपञ्चवगाहितज्ञानावशिष्टं ब्रह्मैव शिष्यः ।।३१।।

That teacher is worthy of worship who leads (the disciple) to Brahman, the indwelling spirit in all the bodies. The disciple is Brahman indeed who destroys the world comprising of five spiritual elements (Prapancha) through wisdom and remains established (Vasistha) in that awareness. (30-31)

A disciple is the one who remains steadfast in Brahman through the practice of Brahmacharya. The Mahabharata (43.9) says that one gets knowledge following the life of a disciple and by being pure. Purity comes by giving up five chords of sensual pleasure which are related to five elements. Teacher is the one who confers immortality and makes the disciple's life perfect. The Svetasvatara Upanishad (VI.23) says, "That noble soul who has supreme devotion to God, and an equal degree of devotion to the Guru, alone is illumined by these teachings (contained in the Upanishad)." The Chandogya Upanishad (VI.14.2) also says, "*Acharyavan Puruso Veda* – a person having teacher knows (the Truth)." The Shruti says, "*Acharya Dhi Eva Vidya Vidita* - only by the grace of a teacher, Vidya is acquired." This

Upanishad makes it very clear that mere acquaintance with the scriptures does not constitute Vidya. Vidya is that which liberates. Since secular education has no such aim, it does not deserve the name of Vidya. Vidya arises only if the disciple leads a life of Brahmacharya paying due respect to the teacher, who himself is a knower of Truth and keen on leading the disciple to Brahmanhood.

Learned and Ignorant Person:

विद्वानिति च सर्वान्तरस्थस्वसंविद्रूप विद्विद्वान् ।।३२।। मूढ इति च कर्तृत्वाद्यहंकारभावनारूढो मूढः ।।३३।।

He is a learned person who knows (Vid) the Self-awareness (Swa-Samvidrooup) present in all beings (Sarvantar Sthita). He who is directed by the egoistic feeling of doership is an ignorant person. (33)

An ignorant person undertakes actions with a feeling of doer and seeks to enjoy the results of actions. He attains perishable worlds and is subjected to recurrent birth and death. Such actions are the cause of bondage. A wise person gives up all selfish actions and seeks to know the Self which is beyond the feeling of doer and enjoyer. In Mahabharata (41.18) sage Sanat Sujata says that the Vedas, when they prescribe fruits of various actions, address them to an ignorant person only who follows Karma. But a wise person, who realises the supreme through knowledge, does not take to Karma. In fact his path of knowledge obstructs all other paths. Therefore a wise person should give up all those actions that give rise to ego-sense of doer and enjoyer.

Demonic and Pure Penance:

आसुरमिति च ब्रह्मविष्ण्वीशानेन्द्रादीनामैश्वर्यकामनया निरशनपाग्निहोत्रा- दिष्वन्तरात्मानं संतापयति चात्युग्ररागद्वेष विहिंसादम्भाद्यपेक्षितं तप आसुरम् ।।३४।।

Demonic penance *consists of starving (Nirasana) with Agnihotra (fire-worship) which inflicts torture to the inner Self and that which is performed with excessive attachment, hatred, severe injury (Vihinsa), and hypocrisy (Dambha) in order to acquire the lordly powers of Brahma, Vishnu, Isana, Indra, etc,. (34)*

तप इति च ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्येत्यपरोक्षज्ञानाग्निना ब्रह्माद्यैश्वर्याशासिद्धसंकल्पबीज संताप तपः ।।३५।।

Pure penance is the elimination of primary cause of desire to acquire the lordly powers of Brahma, etc., through the realisation that Brahman is Sathyam (real) and world is Mithya (neither real nor unreal). (35)

The Bhagavad-Gita (XVII.17-19) describes three types of penance. That penance which is undertaken with supreme faith in the Self by the noble people who are self-restrained and devoid of desire for the results, is called pure. That penance, which is undertaken ostentatiously for being honoured and worshiped, is said to be born out of passion for ever changing and transient world. That penance which is performed by tormenting ones own self or for the destruction of others is said to be born out of delusion. The doctrine of "*Brahma Sathyam Jagath Mithya*" leads to constant abidance in Brahman. Other philosophies that consider this world as real have different goals in view. Sage Sanat Sujata in the Udyoga Parva of the Mahabharata (42.13) says that through pure penance the knowers of the Vedas attain the Supreme which is immortal. Penance performed for attaining worldly goals does not yield such fruits.

The Supreme Abode:

परमपदमिति च प्राणेन्द्रियाद्यन्तः करणगुणादेः परतरं सच्चिदानन्दमयनित्यमुक्तब्रह्मस्थानं परमपदम्।।३६।।

That absolute existence (Brahma Sthanam) which is beyond the causal attributes of Praana, inner-organs, sense-organs, etc., of the nature of Being-Awareness-Bliss, ever-free, is the Supreme Abode. (36)

Supreme abode is the eternal and immutable Brahman reaching which they do not return to this world of human beings. Ignorant people seek to go to heaven by performing meritorious deeds as prescribed in the Vedas. They, being under the control of their egos, depart from this world and return again after enjoyment in heaven when the results of meritorious deeds get exhausted. Having returned they become embodied and are followed by Praana, inner-organs and other sense-

organs. However, a Jnani does not seek heaven through meritorious deeds. He destroys both merits and sins by becoming indifferent to enjoyments through the knowledge of blissful state of Self or Brahman. Having realised Brahman, he becomes free from desire and ego and does not return again after departing from here. Therefore Brahman alone is the supreme abode and not the highest heaven.

Rule of Acceptance and non-Acceptance:

ग्राह्यमिति च देशकालवस्तुपरिच्छेदराहित्यचिन्मात्रस्वरूपं ग्राह्यम् ।।३७।। अग्राह्यमिति च स्वस्वरूपव्यतिरिक्तमायामय बुद्धीन्द्रियगोचर- जगत्सत्यत्वचिन्तनमग्राह्यम् ।।३८।।

That principle alone is to be accepted which cannot be limited by space, time and object and which is of the nature of pure consciousness. That which is different from ones own Self and of the nature of Maya, which is thought of with the mind and intellect, one should reject that doctrine of reality of the world. (37-38)

This Upanishad forcefully rejects the materialistic doctrine which relies on the rational analysis of material sciences and puts forth the fundamental doctrine of unreality of the world. Material sciences are conditioned by space and time. Truth is beyond the causal state (Maya) of manifested universe and does not come within the purview of the mind and intellect. Similarly all other quasi-materialistic doctrines of pseudo spiritualists that consider this world as real and permanent should also be rejected by the wise seekers of liberation.

Characteristics of a Paramhamsa Sannyasin:

संन्यासीति च सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य निर्ममो निरहंकार भूत्वा ब्रह्मेष्टं शरणमुपगम्य तत्त्वमसि सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म नेह नानाऽस्ति किंचनेत्यादिमहावाक्यार्थानुभवज्ञानाद्ब्रह्मैवाहस्मीति निश्चित्य निर्विकल्पसमाधिना स्वतन्त्रो यतिश्चरति स संन्यासी स मुक्तः स पूज्यः स योगी स परमहंसः सोऽवधूतः स ब्राह्मण इति ।।३९।।

He who after giving up all rites and duties (Sarva Dharman Parityajya), becoming free from all worldly attachment, possession and ego, taking refuge in compassionate Brahman, ascertains through the direct realisation in Nirvikalpa Samadhi that "I am Brahman"

with the help of profound declarations (Mahavakya) like "Thou Art That", "All this is verily Brahman", "There is no diversity here", etc.; that wandering independent ascetic is a true Sannyasin; he is liberated; he is adorable; he is the Yogi; he is the Paramhamsa; he is the Avadhoota; he is the Brahmana. (39)

The Bhagavad-Gita (18.51-53) also says that the one who is endowed with pure intellect and steady mind; who is bereft of hankering for sense-objects; who having eliminated attachment and hatred is ever meditative in the solitary places; who is free from worldly desires and relations; who has given up ego, executive power, pride, desire, anger and superfluous possessions; who is unselfish and serene; is fit for becoming Brahman. These are the characteristics of a true Sannyasin of Paramhamsa order. Such a Sannyasin constantly abiding in Brahman becomes all renouncing monk, the one whose duties have left him because of dawn of right knowledge (Samyak Jnana). He has accomplished triple means of Jivan Mukti viz., *Vaasana Khasaya* (effacement of desires), *Mano-Nasha* (dissolution of mind) and *Tattva Jnana* (knowledge of Truth). He therefore is able to constantly abide in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In that Nirvikalpa Samadhi he realises the identity of Self and Brahman. He directly perceives that all this is verily Brahman and there is no diversity. Sage Badarayana in his Brahma Sutra (III.iv.17) says that this knowledge of unity of Self and Brahman belongs to all renouncing monk because this is the teaching of the Vedas. He becomes an Avadhoota, the liberated soul. Such a Paramhamsa Sannyasin is not only a knower of Brahman but unassailable Brahman himself.

निरालम्बोपनिषदं योऽधीते गुर्वनुग्रहतः सोऽग्निपूतो भवति स वायुपूतो भवति न स पुनरावर्तते पुनर्नाभिजायते पुनर्नाभिजायत इत्युपनिषत् ।।४०।।

The one who studies this Niralamba Upanishad receives the grace of Guru; he becomes purified through fire; he becomes purified through air; he does not return again; he does not take rebirth; he does not take rebirth. This is the Upanishad. (40)

ॐ तत् सत्

मैत्रेयोपनिषत्
(MAITREYA UPANISHAD)*

* The Upanishad containing the advice given to sage Maitreya

मैत्रेयोपनिषत्

MAITREYA UPANISHAD

This Upanishad, which forms part of Samaveda, is the twenty ninth among the one hundred and eight Upanishads. This Upanishad sets forth the guidelines given by Lord Siva to sage Maitreya for Self-realisation. The main purport of this Upanishad is to convince the seekers about the vain pursuit for worldly life and prompt them to renounce the world for the sake of Self-knowledge. Worldly people, basing their arguments on perverted reasoning, lead a life like a frog in a well being attached to this impure body and knowing nothing beyond this phenomenal universe. Being swayed by transient sense pleasures, they are averse to the eternal bliss of Brahman. This Upanishad is well known for its impartial and fundamental prescriptions which are beyond any religion, castes and stages of life. This makes its teachings universal. Wise seekers will appreciate the frankness and boldness of Upanishadic seers in imparting the supreme knowledge. This Upanishad insists for purity of mind, the discarding of ego and the renunciation of motivated actions for realisation of the supreme. This Upanishad concludes with the personal experiences of sage Maitreya who expresses them after advancing in Sadhana.

ॐ आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि वाक्प्राणश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि।
सर्वं ब्रह्मौपनिषदं माऽहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्यां मा मा ब्रह्म
निराकरोदनिराकरणमस्त्वनिराकरणं मे अस्तु ।
तदात्मनि निरते य उपनिषत्सु धर्मास्ते मयि सन्तु ते मयि सन्तु ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।।

May my limbs, speech, vital force, eyes, ears, strength and all organs grow vigorous. Everything is the Brahman of Upanishads. May I never deny Brahman. May Brahman never deny me. May there be no denial of Brahman. May there be no spurning by Brahman. May all the virtues that are (spoken of) in the Upanishads repose in me who am engaged in the pursuit of the Self. May they repose in me.

Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

प्रथमोऽधयाय:

First Chapter

QUEST FOR SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The Quest for Self-knowledge begins only when one considers all pleasures, relating to the world of human beings upto the world of Brahma, as worthless and discards all sense objects as poison. King Brhadartha having got disillusioned with worldly life performed severe austerities in quest of Self-knowledge. This Upanishad intends to bring forth the pristine philosophy of the Self and begins its elucidation of the Self only after ascertaining the qualification of the aspirant.

Dispassion - The basic qualification:

बृहद्रथो वै नाम राजा राज्ये ज्येष्ठं पुत्रं निधापयित्वेदमशाश्वतं मन्यमान: शरीरं वैराग्यमुपेतोऽरण्यं निर्जगाम । स तत्र परमं तप आस्थायादित्यमीक्षमाण ऊर्ध्वबाहुस्तिष्ठति। अन्ते सहस्त्रस्य मुनेरन्तिकमाजगाम । अग्निरिवाधूमकस्तेजसा निर्दहन्निवात्मविद्भगवाञ्छाकायन्य उत्तिष्ठेत्तिष्ठ वरं वृणीष्वेति राजानमब्रवीत्। स तस्मै नमस्कृत्योवाच । भगवन्नाहमात्मवित् , त्वं तत्त्ववित् श्रृणुमो वयम् । स त्वं नो ब्रूहीति । एतद् वृत्तं पुरस्तादशक्यं मा पृच्छ प्रश्नम् एक्ष्वाकान्यान् कामान् वृणीष्वेति । शाकायन्यस्य चरणावभिमृशमानो राजेमां गाथां जगाद।।१।।

A king by name Brhadartha, having entrusted the kingdom to his eldest son and having developed disgust (towards worldly life) on account of deliberation that this body is impermanent, he went to forest (for penance). There he performed severe penance (and) remained facing the sun-god with his arms raised up. At the end of a thousand years the sun-god approached the king (in the form of sage Sakayanya). The sage Sakayanya, the knower of Self, with brilliance like flame without smoke that burns all, said to the king: ' Get up, get up, choose a boon'. Saluting him the king said: 'Gracious Lord, I am not the Knower of Atma. You being the knower of truth, reveal that to me.' This boon of yours cannot be granted. Explanation of this (question) is impossible in the first place. Do not ask me this question. Oh descendant of Ikshvaku, choose (the fulfillment of) other desires.' Reverentially touching the feet of sage Sakayanya, the king sang the

following verses from epic. (1)

अथ किमेतैर्वान्यानां शोषणं महार्णवानां शिखरिणां प्रपतनं ध्रुवस्य प्रचलनं स्थानं वा तरूणां निमज्जनं पृथिव्याः स्थानादपसरणं सुराणाम् । सोऽहमित्येतद्विधेऽस्मिन् संसारे किं कामोपभोगैर्यैरेवाश्रितस्यासकृदुपावर्तनं दृक्ष्यत इत्युद्धर्तुमर्हसीति अन्धूदपानस्थो भेक इवाहमास्मिन् संसारे भगवंस्त्वं नो गतिरिति ।।२।।

What else is there to desire other things (when there is) drying of vast oceans, falling down of mountains, trembling of the polestar, dislocation of trees, submergence of the earth and loss of position by the gods. In this dual worldly life of mine and thine, what is the use of desiring worldly pleasures resorting to which there is seen repeated return (to this phenomenal world). Thus it befits you to uplift me (from this worldly life). I am like a frog in a well in this worldly life. Lord, you are my refuge. Thus (the king pleaded). (2)

The idea is that the one who knows the transient nature of worldly life will never seek fulfillment of any desire. The Katha Upanishad (II.i.2) therefore says, "The discriminating people, having known what true immortality is in the midst of impermanent things, do not pray for anything here (in this world)." Vairagya Satkam (43 & 44) also shows similar dispassion from worldly pleasures thus: "Daily, with the rising and setting of the sun, life is shortened, and time is not felt on account of worldly business burdened with manifold activities. Neither is fear produced at beholding birth, death, old age and sufferings. (Alas), the world has become mad by drinking the stupefying wine of delusion. Alas, through infatuation we do not feel ashamed at being thus befooled by this Samsara (family life) with occupations in which the same thing recurs." Now the king refers to the impure nature of the body and shows utter disgust for it.

भगवन्निदं शरीरं मैथुनादेवोद्भूतं संविदपेतं निरय एव मूत्रद्वारेण निष्क्रान्तमस्थिभिश्चितं मांसेनानुलिप्तं चर्मणावबद्धं विण्मूत्रवातपित्तकफमज्ञामेदोवसाभिरन्यैश्च मलैर्बहुभिः परिपूर्णम् । एतादृशे शरीरे वर्तमानस्य भगवंस्त्वं नो गतिरिति ।।३।।

Lord, this body is the outcome of procreation alone, is devoid of consciousness and is verily hell as it has been delivered through the urinal path, full of bones, enveloped with flesh and encased in skin; it is full of faeces, urine, air, bile, phlegm, marrow, fat, oily substance

and excessive filthy matter. Living in a body of such kind, Lord, you are my refuge. Thus (the king prayed). (3)

The sage tests the sincerity and determination of the aspirant for supreme knowledge. We find similar incidences in Katha Upanishad and Chandogya Upanishad also. Finding that the king is not lured by worldly attractions, the sage expresses his inner joy in the following verse.

अथ भगवाञ्क्षाकायन्यः सुप्रीतोऽब्रवीद्राजानम् । महाराज बृहद्रथेक्ष्वाकुवंशध्वजशीर्षात्मज्ञः कृतकृत्यस्त्वं मरून्नाम्ना विश्रुतोऽसीत्ययं खल्वात्मा ते । कतमो भगवन् वर्ण्य इति। तं होवाच ।।४।।

Then his holiness sage Sakayanya immensely pleased, spoke to the king: "Great king Brhadratha, you are foremost in the family of the Ikshvaku, a knower of the Atman, you have attained fulfillment in life, and are heard of far and wide by the name Marut. You are such a noble soul." Excessive good looking Lord described thus. He said to the king. (4)

Necessity of tranquil mind for Self-knowledge:

The knowledge of Self cannot be imparted to the one who has not purified the mind and has not withdrawn from sense objects. For, the Upanishad says "At the very outset, purify the disciple through virtues such as Sama (mind control) and Dama (sense control), etc. after this impart to him the teaching that all this is pure and unsullied Brahman." (Mahopanishad, V.104). The sage having ascertained the requisite qualifications of the king and being greatly pleased with the virtues possessed by the king, now sets forth the guidelines for attaining a tranquil mind.

शब्दस्पर्शादयो येऽर्था अनर्था इव ते स्थिताः ।
येषां सक्तस्तु भूतात्मा न स्मरेच्च परं पदम् ।।५।।

The object of the senses like sound and touch, etc. are ascertained to be the evils for an embodied soul who is attached to them and does not reflect on the supreme goal. (5)

Detachment from sense objects is said to be the auspicious path that leads to the supreme goal. We may recall here an imagery from Katha Upanishad (I.iii.3 & 4). आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेवतु । बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रगहमेव च ।। "The embodied Soul is the master of the chariot and the body is said to be the chariot. The intellect is the charioteer and the mind is verily the bridle. Wise people call the organs as horses and the sense objects as the roads. The discriminating people call that embodied soul as the enjoyer when it is associated with body, organs, and mind. The sense organs of a non-discriminating intellect, which are associated with an unrestrained mind, become unruly like the vicious horses of the charioteer. Then the master of the chariot (soul) does not attain the supreme goal." The wise seekers discriminate between real and unreal and perform austerities for the attainment of the supreme goal while fools strive for worldly prosperity.

तपसा प्राप्यते सत्त्वं सत्त्वात् संप्राप्यते मनः ।
मनसा प्राप्यते ह्यात्मा ह्यत्मापत्त्या निवर्तते ।।६।।

Through austerity is attained strength of character; from character one attains (firmness of) mind; through (steady) mind one realises Atman; from realisation of Atman descent (worldly life or rebirth) is prevented. (6)

It is essential here to read the above verse along with the following verse from Mahanarayana for deriving true knowledge. The Mahanarayana Upanishad (or Yajniki Upanishad) mentions that renunciation is the highest kind of austerity "These other austerities are surely inferior, renunciation alone surpasses all." (Mahanarayana Upanishad, 78.12) Through renunciation one learns to live on the strength derived from Self-knowledge and becomes fearless. Renunciation results in liberation. This is the true import of Vedantic teachings. "The (wise) know liberation to be the renunciation of (all) attachment; non-birth results from it. Give up the worldly life; be liberated in life, O sinless one!" Annapurna Upanishad (5.4)

यथा निरिन्धनो वह्निः स्वयोनावुपशाम्यति ।
तथा वृत्तिक्षयाच्चितं स्वयोनावुपशाम्यति ।।७।।

Just as the fire whose fuel has exhausted, calms down in itself,

similarly the mind, whose functions have ceased, becomes tranquil in its source (in Atman). (7)

The mind becomes tranquil in Atman only if all the latent impressions of the mind are effaced completely through the renunciation of desires. Since family life is prompted by desires, it is opposed to the merger of the mind in the Atman. The mind remains latent with all its potential inspite of the performance of various rituals which are prescribed for a householder. The mind of a householder purified by rituals merges in unmanifested state (Prakriti) and does not attain identity with the Atman. However, a desireless man who seeks the Self alone, the Self becomes known to him on Its own accord and his mind automatically gets merged in its source (Ref. Katha Upanishad, I.ii.23).

स्वयोनावुपशान्तस्य मनसः सत्यगामिनः ।
इन्द्रियार्थविमूढस्यानृताः कर्मवशानुगा : ।।८।।

When the mind becomes tranquil in its source and abides by the truth, the inevitable consequence of actions performed because of imprudent sense objects, becomes non-existent. (8)

The mind is said to be abiding by the truth when it discriminates between real and unreal and discards the objective world treating it as unsubstantial. "One who has discriminated (the nature of things according to Vedanta), the modifications of whose mind (prompted by the objective world) have ceased, who has given up all reasoning (about the reality of the world), who has discarded the objective appearances as worthless and dwells upon the eternal alone, is said to have a mind that conforms to the eternal truth." (Mahopanishad, V.61&62) All actions are effaced in this state of mind.

चित्तमेव हि संसारस्तत्प्रयत्नेन शोधयेत् ।
यच्चित्तस्तन्मयो भाति गुह्यमेतत् सनातनम् ।।९।।

The mind alone constitutes worldly life. It should be purified through (self) effort. As is the mind so is the perception. This is the eternal secret. (9)

Self-effort here refers to that one should use the power of discrimination to find faults and evils associated with the worldly life. It is very difficult for an embodied soul to develop this detachment from worldly life for, the Upanishad says "It is (possible) reasonable to envelop wind and to divide the sky into pieces, to string together waves of water but not (possible to) give up attachment towards (worldly) life." Mahopanishad (III.11). It is said that the mind is the basis of this entire creation (मनोमूलम इदं जगत्). From this sea of worldly life there is no way out except by victory over the mind. 'Master the mind and become a mastermind' is the supreme doctrine for spiritual aspirants.

चित्तस्य हि प्रसादेन हन्ति कर्म शुभाशुभम् ।
प्रसन्नात्मात्मनि स्थित्वा सुखमव्ययमश्नुते ।।१०।।

By the benediction of (pure) mind alone, one destroys good and evil actions. With the serene mind, when one dwells in the Atman, one experiences eternal bliss. (10)

The Mind is said to be beneficent when it has dissolved itself in the supreme Self by giving up all cravings, resulting in the experience of eternal bliss. "The paternal mind having perceived directly in the light of the Sastras and having experienced directly through intuition; dissolves itself giving up ego resulting in supreme perfection." (Mahopanishad, V.81).

समासक्तं यदा चित्तं जन्तोर्विषयगोचरे ।
यद्येवं ब्रह्मणि स्याद् तत् को न मुच्येत बन्धनात् ।।११।।

When a person subdues the natural attachment of the mind to sense objects and thinks of Brahman, then who will not be freed from bondage? (11)

The Varaha Upanishad also prescribes the ceaseless contemplation of Brahman to subdue the illusion of the mind. "This worldly existence, which is an ocean of sorrow, is nothing but a long-lived dream, or an illusion of the mind or a long-lived reign of the mind. From rising from sleep till going to bed, the one Brahman alone should be contemplated upon." (Varaha Up.2.64).

Philosophy of the Self:

Having established the ways to attain a tranquil mind through self-effort, now the sage elucidates the ways to realise the Supreme Self.

हृत्पुण्डरीकमध्ये तु भावयेत् परमेश्वरम् ।
साक्षिणं बुद्धिनृत्तस्य परमप्रेमगोचरम्।।१२।।

One should intuitively feel the supreme Lord seated in the middle of the lotus of the heart as a witness of all the modifications of the intellect (and) perceptible through supreme love. (12)

Supreme Love is the means to perceive the Lord in one's own heart. Narada Bhakti Sutra (I.7) mentions that supreme love is not of the nature of lust but it is a form of renunciation. It further elaborates (III. 35) that supreme love is attained by giving up the objective reality of the world and the consequent renunciation of attachment. This Upanishad, however, does not suggest the worship of any external god for this end but insists on intuitive realisation of the supreme Lord within one's own heart as the witness of the intellect.

अगोचरं मनोवाचामवधूताधिसंप्लुवम् ।
सत्तामात्रप्रकाशैकस्वभावं भावनातिगम् ।।१३।।

(Supreme Lord is) beyond the reach of mind and speech, the spiritual preceptor of those drowned (in worldly life), absolute existence, effulgence (as His) nature (and the one Who) transcends thought. (13)

The supreme Lord is beyond description through speech and beyond comprehension through the mind. He transcends the chores of worldly life. Thus, the Katha Upanishad says, "This Atma cannot be realised through speech, or through much hearing." Since He does not come in contact with the thought of the mind, the mind returns without reaching Him.

अहेयमनुपादेयमसामान्यविशेषणम् ।
ध्रुवं स्तिमितगम्भीरं न तेजो न तमस्ततम्
निर्विकल्पं निराभासं निर्वाणमयसंविदम् ।।१४।।

He is ever manifested (or He is indispensable as He is the basis of everything), without preference (He cannot be included within the purview of the mind), surpassing (all) attributes, firmly established (unchanging), tranquil (steady), profound in character, neither light nor the darkness, unwavering (without thought), formless (without appearance) and knowledge that confers final emancipation. (14)

नित्यः शुद्धो बुद्धमुक्तस्वभावः सत्यः सूक्ष्मः संविभुश्चद्वितीयः ।
आनन्दाब्धिर्यः परः सोऽहमस्मि प्रत्यग्धातुर्नात्र संशीतिरस्ति ।।१५।।

The one Who is eternal, pure, intelligent (consciousness), of boundless nature, truth, subtle, supremely powerful, one without a second, ocean of bliss and transcendental, is none other than I, the innermost essence (of all); there is not an iota of doubt in this (understanding). (15)

Necessity of renunciation of worldly life:

आनन्दमन्तर्निजमाश्रयन्तमाशापिशाचीमवमानयन्तम् ।
आलोकयन्तं जगदिन्द्रजालमापत् कथं मां प्रविशेदसङ्गम् ।।१६।।

How can the she-devil of worldly desire treat me contemptuously when I am resting on the inner bliss of the Self? How can (phenomenal world) enter in me when I am free from worldly desires and perceive this phenomenal world as an illusion? (16)

The Narada Parivrajaka Upanishad (3.15 & 16) substantiates the above idea and mentions thus, "Having known Samsara (Worldly life) as one without Sara (or essence) and not having undergone any marriage on account of the desire to know the Sara (essence or Atman), they become Samnyasins on account of the practice of supreme Vairagya (dispassion). The characteristic of Pravritti (extrovert path) is the performance of Karma; that of Nivritti (introvert path) is Jnana. Therefore placing Jnana in the forefront, the wise man should take up Samnyasa" The next verse recommends the renunciation of all obligatory duties (pertaining to caste and order of life) prescribed by the Vedas.

वर्णाश्रमाचारयुता विमूढाः कर्मानुसारेण फलं लभन्ते ।
वर्णादिधर्मं हि परित्यजन्तः स्वानन्दतृप्ताः पुरूषा भवन्ति ।।१७।।

Those ignorant people who follow the prescriptions of Varna (caste) and Ashrama (order of life) obtain the commensurate reward of their actions (only worldly prosperity). Those who renounce the ways of caste, etc., and are satisfied with the bliss of the Self get merged in Purusha (while others get merged in Prakriti only and do not attain the supreme state). (17)

The main intention of the Upanishad is to impart knowledge of the Self and not to issue commandments. Varna and Ashrama Dharma are applicable to only ignorant people who are under the illusion of the body. We find a revolt among the Upanishadic sages against the narrow man made Ashrama and Purushartha Dharma, for its results are confined to Prakriti alone. It does not promise the supreme state of Brahman. Upanishadic sages have always propagated the ideal of Ativarnashrami (beyond the state of Varna and Ashrama). "The one who knows the transcendental principle of Self, becomes Ativarnashrami (transcends Varna and Ashrama like caste and order of life). Varna and Ashrama are imagined due to the illusion of the body" (Narada Parivrajaka Upanishad, 6.14)

वर्णाश्रमं सावयवस्वरूपमाद्यन्तयुक्तं ह्यतिकृच्छ्रमात्रम् ।
पुत्रादिदेहेष्वभिमानशून्यं भूत्वा वसेत् सौख्यतमे ह्यनन्ते ।।१८।।

Caste and order of life consisting of divisions (based on the transient body) has a beginning and an end and brings only misery and hardship. By giving up attachment to sons, etc. and pride in the body one should live in the eternal supreme happiness. (18)

Parameswara mentions the state of Ativarnashrami to Vishnu in Suta Samhita thus: "Varna and Ashrama, etc. are imaginary things imposed on the body through Maya (delusion) and they have nothing to do with Me, nor are ever in Me who is the Self, which is absolute intelligence - this he who knows from the Vedanta becomes the Ativarnashrami." (Suta Samhita, 19&20). Thus we find the expression of this stage in various Self realised souls.

नाहं मनुष्यो न च देवयक्षौ न ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियवैश्यशूद्राः ।
न ब्रह्मचारी न गृही वनस्थो भिक्षुर्न चाहं निजबोधरूपः ।।

"I am neither a human being, nor a god, nor a demi-god. I am neither a Brahmin, nor a Kshatriya, nor a Vaisya, nor a Shudra. I am neither a student nor a householder nor a forest dweller nor a monk, I am the Self." (Hastamalaka Strotam, 2). This is the stage of Ativarnashrami of a Self realised soul. This chapter ends with a note that outlines the necessity of renunciation of worldly life in the quest of Self-knowledge.

इति प्रथमोऽध्याय:

Thus ends the first Chapter

द्वितीयोऽध्याय:

Second Chapter

LORD SIVA'S ADVICE TO SAGE MAITREYA

The central theme of this chapter is to establish the standard rules of conduct for an ascetic and reveal their inner meanings. The principles and propositions delineated in this chapter are free from all prejudices and perverted interpretations.

Process of Self-Purification:

अथ भगवान् मैत्रेय: कैलासं जगाम । तं गत्वोवाच । भो भगवन् परमतत्वरहस्यमनुब्रूहीति । स होवाच महादेव: ।।१।।

Then His holiness sage Maitreya went to Kailash. Approaching Him (the Lord of Kailash) he said : 'O Lord, reveal to me the secret of supreme Truth.' The great god (Mahadeva) said to him: (1)

देहो देवालय: प्रोक्त: स जीव: केवल: शिव: ।
त्यजेदज्ञाननिर्माल्यं सोऽभावेन पूज्येत् ।।२।।

The body is spoken to be the temple; the embodied soul alone is Siva (The Auspicious one). One should discard the faded flowers (unfit for worship) of ignorance and offer the worship with the feeling of 'Soham' (I am He). (2)

अभेददर्शनं ज्ञानं ध्यानं निर्विषयं मन: ।
स्नानं मनोमलत्याग: शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रह: ।।३।।

Vision of non-duality is (true) knowledge; rendering the mind free from impressions of sensual objects is (true) meditation; removing the impurities of the mind is (true) bathing; withdrawal of the senses is (true) self-purification. (3)

ब्रह्मामृतं पिबेद्भैक्षमाचरेद् देहरक्षणे ।
वसेदेकान्तिको भूत्वा चैकान्ते द्वैतवर्जिते ।
इतयेवमाचरेद्धीमान् स एव मुक्तिमाप्नुयात् ।।४।।

He should partake the nectar of Brahman, resort to alms for sustaining the body, and live in solitary place by establishing himself in oneness (of Brahman) and discarding duality. Thus should a wise man live (abide by the said established rules of conduct). He alone will attain liberation. (4)

The Vedas prescribe various rituals (Karma) and worship (Upasana) for external and internal purifications. These rules of purification are effective only if the sense organs are rendered free from the sensual pleasures. However, if the sense organs and inner organs are attached to sensual pleasures, these rules of purification do not check the evil propensities without abstinence. The Mundaka Upanishad (II.i.3) says that the mind (inner organs) and sense organs originate from Brahman because of past latent impressions (*Vasanas*). Unless we resolve these latent impressions back into their causal state, this attachment to sensual pleasures will continue inspite of performing rituals and worships. Therefore, the canon of Manu says that those sense organs which are hankering for sensual pleasures cannot be restrained as effectively through abstinence as by constant pursuit of knowledge. The above four verses describe the unique process of purification through constant pursuit of knowledge. The Bhagavad-Gita (IV.38) also says, "There is nothing on this earth as purifying as knowledge."

Impurities of the body and its cleanliness:

जातं मृतमिदं देहं मातापितृमलात्मकम् ।
सुखदुःखालयामेध्यं स्पृष्ट्वा स्नानं विधीयते ।।५।।

This body which has been brought into existence because of discharge of impure matters of parents has a death. It is the abode of joy and sorrow. One who touches this impure body (i.e. thinks that this body is mine), bathing (as aforesaid) is enjoined. (5)

धातुबद्धं महारोगं पापमन्दिरमध्रुवम् ।
विकाराकारविस्तीर्णं स्पृष्ट्वा स्नानं विधीयते ।।६।।

It is formed from primary elements, subjected to serious ailments, abode of sinful actions, ephemeral and has got a distorted form because of outstretched organs. One who touches this impure body, bathing (as aforesaid) is enjoined. (6)

नवद्वारमलस्त्रावं सदा काले स्वभावजम् ।
दुर्गन्धं दुर्मलोपेतं स्पृष्ट्वा स्नानं विधीयते ।।७।।

It regularly driven by nature emits filthy matter through nine apertures. It stinks on account of being impure. One who touches this impure body, bathing (as aforesaid) is enjoined. (7)

मात्रा सूतकसंबद्धं सुतके सह जायते ।
मृतसूतकजं देह स्पृष्ट्वा स्नानं विधीयते ।।८।।

This body is related with the impurity of the mother (before birth) and it is born with the impurity caused by child-birth. This body is connected with death after birth. One who touches this impure body, bathing (as aforesaid) is enjoined. (8)

अहं ममेति विण्मूत्रलेपगन्धादिलोचनम् ।
शुद्धशौचमिति प्रोक्तं मृज्जलाभ्यां तु लौकिकम् ।।९।।

Perceiving the notion of "I" and "mine" (with respect to this body) is (like) smearing one self with faeces and urine (instead of) perfume. Thus sacred purification has been prescribed (in the above verses) while purification by mud and water is only customary (not sacred). (9)

चित्तशुद्धिकरं शौचं वासनात्रयनाशकम् ।
ज्ञानवैराग्यमृत्तोयैः क्षालनाच्छौचमुच्यते ।।१०।।

Purification which renders the mind pure, consists of the elimination of three types of tendencies (viz. Loka Vasana, Sashtra Vasana and Deha Vasana). Purification with the mud of knowledge and the water of detachment is said to be the most sacred. (10)

The main purport of the above six verses (from 5 onwards) is to demonstrate the impure nature of the body. The principle of purity emanates from this realisation. The Atman is eternally pure and our real nature. Without realising our true nature we cannot attain real purity, however much we may perform rituals and discharge our obligatory duties. This outlines the flaws in the philosophy conceived by some deluded householders that one attains purity by discharging

the family obligations. This perception is only a false identification with the impure body. This Upanishad concludes its prescription for purification by advising seekers to inculcate Jnana (knowledge) and Vairagya (dispassion).

Prescriptions for an ascetic:

अद्वैतभावना भैक्षमभक्ष्यं द्वैतभावनम् ।
गुरूशास्त्रोक्तभावेन भिक्षोभैक्षं विधीयते ।।११।।

The feeling of non-duality is the alms (food partaken) while feeling of duality is the food which is forbidden. (However from the pint of view of empirical world) living on alms in conformance with the directions of the preceptor and scriptures has been enjoined for the mendicant monk. (11)

विद्वान् स्वदेशमुत्सृज्य संन्यासानन्तरं स्वतः ।
कारागारविनिर्मुक्तचोरवद् दूरतो वसेत् ।।१२।।

The wise one having embraced renunciation on his own accord shall abandon his native place and stay far away (to avoid identity) like a thief who has been released from prison (never returns to the same place where he was caught while stealing). (12)

अहंकारसुतं वित्तभ्रातरं मोहमन्दिरम् ।
आशापत्नीं त्यजेद्यावत् तावन्मुक्तो न सशंयः ।।१३।।

The moment (mendicant monk) renounces the son of ego, brother of wealth, home of infatuation and wife of desire, that very moment (he) undoubtedly attains liberation. (13)

Above three verses mention the sign of a true ascetic. Renunciation by external signs like ochre robe, bald headed, etc. is only customary. A true renunciant must have his vision turned inward seeing the Self in all and all in the Self. Having given up ego (*Ahamkar*) and all attachment (*Mamkar*) he should turn away from his native place.

मृता मोहमयी माता जातो बोधमयः सुतः ।
सूतकद्वयसंप्राप्तो कथं संध्यामुपासमहे ।।१४।।

When the mother of passion is dead and the son of wisdom is born leading to twofold impurities, how shall I perform twilight worship? (14)

The scriptures have prohibited the performance of any religious rituals for ten days when there is impurity caused either by birth or death in the family. The Lord mentions that when non-dual wisdom arises it becomes impossible for the ascetic to resort to dualistic worship. The prescription of external worship is operative till the awakening of self-knowledge after which the wise ascetic resorts to wisdom worship. It will be befitting here to recall Lord Hanuman's devotion towards Lord Rama.

देहबुद्धया तु दासोऽस्मि जीवबुद्धया त्वदंशकः ।
आत्मबुद्धया त्वमेवाहमिति मे निश्चिता मतिः ।।

"O Lord while I am identified with the body, I am Thy servant. When I consider myself as an embodied soul, I am Thy part. And when I look upon myself as the Spirit, I am one with Thee - this is my firm conviction." This perception is also non-dual in nature and conforms to the dictum of the above Upanishadic verse (14).

हृदाकाशे चिदादित्यः सदा भासति भासति ।
नास्तमेति न चोदेति कथं संध्यामुपास्महे ।।१५।।

When the bright sun of consciousness ever shines in the sky of the heart and it neither sets nor rises, how shall I perform twilight worship (i.e. for seer of non-duality worship is superfluous)? (15)

The Paramahamsa Upanishad (2) mentions thus: "Through the knowledge of unity of the (individual) self and the Supreme Self their distinction is destroyed and that alone is Sandhya (performed at the union of two time phases based on the position of sun)." One should give up external worship only when one experiences ceaseless light of consciousness in one's own heart otherwise there is a great danger of becoming egoistic.

एकमेवाद्वितीयं यद् गुरोर्वाक्येन निश्चितम् ।
एतदेकान्तमित्युक्तं न मठं न वनान्तरम् ।।१६।।

The definite conclusion derived from the instructions of the preceptor

that there is only one without a second, alone is the solitude favourable (for meditation) and not a monastery nor the interior of a forest. (16)

असंशयवतां मुक्तिः संशयाविष्टचेतसाम् ।
न मुक्तिर्जन्मजन्मान्ते तस्माद्विश्वसमाप्नुयात् ।।१७।।

The one without doubt attains liberation (but) for one with a doubtful mind there is no liberation even after repeated births. Therefore one should inculcate faith (in the non-duality of Atman). (17)

Real Renunciation:

कर्मत्यागान्न संन्यासो न प्रैषोच्चारणेन तु ।
संधौ जीवात्मनोरैक्यं संन्यासः परिकीर्तितः ।।१८।।

There is no (true) renunciation by giving up action or by reciting of Praisa Mantra (at the formal ceremony of renunciation called Viraaj Homa). Oneness of embodied soul (Jiva) and Atman has been proclaimed to be (true) renunciation. (18)

वमनाहारवद्यस्य भाति सर्वेषणादिषु ।
तस्याधिकारः संन्यासे त्यक्तदेहाभिमानिनः ।।१९।।

He, to whom all primary desires etc. (viz. Dhaneshna, Dareshna and Putreshna - desires for wealth, wife and progeny) appear like vomited food and who has given up pride in his body, is entitled for renunciation. (19)

In the light of above dictum, it is essential here to make a reference of the following passage taken from various Upanishads that set guidelines for Samnyasa and which has been wrongly translated by the various scholars.

वीराघ्वाने वानाशके वापां प्रवेशे वाग्निप्रवशे वा महाप्रस्थाने वा

According to these scholars only persons belonging to the Brahmin caste are entitled for renunciation and people belonging to the Kshatriya and Vaishya castes are debarred from embracing Samnyasa.

They may seek liberation through the act of heroism (giving up life while fighting a battle), or retiring into the forest till death, or entering into water (to rise no more), or entering into fire (to be burnt into ashes) or undertaking a never ending journey (till the body collapses). Such an interpretation is out of context in Vedantic Philosophy, for it has been made very clear that a Brahmin is the one who has realised the Brahman and not a person belonging to a certain caste. On the contrary, Vedanta has commanded sincere aspirants to shun all ideas of caste, order of life and social obligations in the quest of Self-knowledge. This philosophy has cautioned aspirants against seeking immortality through any other means except through Self-knowledge. The other means mentioned in the above passage are only for attaining heaven. The Lord in the Gita (II.32) has also expressed a similar view. The true purport of Vedantic teachings is to prompt the aspirant to seek Self-knowledge. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad has declared in unequivocal terms that the one who seeks Self-knowledge can renounce irrespective of caste, order of life, etc. "Desiring this world (Atmaloka) alone monks renounce their homes" (Brihadaranyaka Up. 4.4.22). However those who do not feel any inclination for Self-knowledge can aspire to attain heaven through other means and it is not mandatory for them to renounce worldly life.

यदा मनसि वैराग्यं जातं सर्वेषु वस्तुषु ।
तदैव संन्यसेद्विद्वानन्यथा पतितो भवेत् ।।२०।।

A wise one should embrace renunciation only when (true) dispassion for all worldly objects has arisen in the mind; otherwise he becomes degenerated. (20)

Only those who have given up all desires of this world as well as the other world (including Brahmaloka) and wish to perform austerity for the sake of Self-Knowledge, should embrace monastic life. The Satyayani Upanishad (31) warns against the pseudo ascetic who does not observe its law. "Having embraced renunciation, if one does not live observing its laws, he is to be known as 'fallen from grace' (Arudhachyuta) - such is the Vedic injunction."

द्रव्यार्थमन्नवस्त्रार्थं यः प्रतिष्ठार्थमेव वा ।
संन्यसेदुभयभ्रष्टः स मुक्तिं नाप्तुमर्हति ।।२१।।

He who renounces worldly life for the sake of securing wealth, food, clothing or fame (or dwelling house like a monastery) is ruined both ways (he neither advances spiritually nor worldly); he does not deserve liberation. (21)

A Similar warning has also been given in other Upanishads regarding the fake and ostentatious ascetic who does not possess the required qualifications. "One who lives by accepting alms without (the qualifications of) patience, wisdom, dispassion and the qualifications beginning with Sama (control of mind), is the destroyer of the order of life of an ascetic. By merely holding a staff or getting the head bald or another disguise or through ostentatious observances, one does not attain liberation." (Narada Parivrajaka Upanishad, 4.27)

Prescriptions for life of an ascetic order:

उत्तमा तत्त्वचिन्तैव मध्यमं शास्त्रचिन्तनम् ।
अधमा मन्त्रचिन्ता च तीर्थभ्रान्त्यधमाधमा ।।२२।।

The most exalted ones contemplate on the reality (nameless and formless unconditioned Brahman): the average evolved people deliberate on the (precept and command of various) scriptures; the inferior ones think of the Mantras (mystical formula addressed to various individual deities); the lowest ones are deluded by (the efficacy of) places of pilgrimage. (22)

अनुभूतिं विना मूढो वृथा ब्रह्मणि मोदते ।
प्रतिबिम्बितशाखाग्रफलास्वादनमोदवत् ।।२३।।

Without intuitive realisation (direct knowledge), foolish persons delight in vain in the indirect knowledge (bookish knowledge) of Brahman like the joy derived by tasting the fruit from a branch of an image tree. (23)

There is a common tendency among the learned people to study and discuss about the Upanishad without purifying the mind for the highest adventure. Here is a warning for such insincere people who delight in the intellectual deliberation of Brahman. Brahman has to be experienced through intuition.

न त्यजेच्चेद्यतिर्मुक्तो यो माधूकरमान्तरम् ।
वैराग्यजनकं श्रद्धाकलत्रं ज्ञाननन्दनम् ।।२४।।

If an ascetic does not give up (i.e. retains) the inner father of dispassion, wife of faith and the son of knowledge while receiving the alms (from various houses) like a bee (collects honey from flowers without attracted by any other object), he is liberated. (24)

धनवृद्धा वयोवृद्धा विद्यावृद्धास्तथैव च ।
ते सर्वे ज्ञानवृद्धस्य किंकराः शिष्यकिंकराः ।।२५।।

People possessing great wealth, elder in age and similarly those highly educated, all these are (but) attendants, (nay) the attendants of the disciples of those who are advanced in spiritual knowledge. (25)

मन्मयया मोहितचेतसो मामात्मानमापूर्णमलब्धवन्तः ।
परं विदग्धोदरपूरणाय भ्रमन्ति काका इव सूरयोऽपि ।।२६।।

Deluded in mind by my creative power, even accomplished ones do not regard me, the all-pervasive Atman. They roam around like crows following cunning ways to fill the belly. (26)

Accomplished ones here refer to the intellectuals and highly educated people holding prominent positions in society. Such people even though very intelligent, live in delusion because of cravings. "Though intellectual, though highly educated, though high-born and eminent, one is bound by cravings (for wealth, wife and progeny) like a lion (tied with) a chain." (Mahopanishad, V.87). The meaning conveyed is that an ascetic who derives his strength from Self-knowledge is superior to educated people who are unaware of the Atman.

पाषाणलोहमणिमृन्मयविग्रहेषु पूजा पुनर्जननभोगकरी मुमुक्षोः ।
तस्माद्यतिः स्वहृदयार्चनमेव कुर्याद्बाह्यार्चनं परिहरेदपुनर्भावाय ।।२७।।

Worship of idols made of stones, metal, gem and clay results in rebirth and enjoyment (in heaven) to the aspirants (of liberation); hence an ascetic should perform worship (of Brahman seated in the spiritual heart - this worship is also called Dahar Upasana) in his heart alone. He should discard external worship in order to prevent rebirth. (27)

External worship is prescribed to the novice for the gradual evolution of the mind. It should be performed only to supplement the inner worship in the heart for the realisation of the all pervasive divinity. Tantrasara also substantiates this view.

प्रथमा प्रतिमा-पूजा जपस्तोत्रादि मध्यमा ।
उत्तमा मानसी पूजा सोऽहं पूजोत्तमोत्तमा ।।

"Worshipping of idol is the first step; better than this is the repetition of the holy Name and singing of divine glories. Better still is mental worship through contemplation and the last and the highest is to realize 'I am He'. "

Divinity should not be confined to an idol with a specific name and form alone. We should first see all the names and forms through our personal god and then realise the impersonal Who is formless and nameless. Worship of the personal god should culminate in the realisation of the impersonal god rather the name of our personal god should take us to the nameless and the form should take us to the formless. Worship that does not help in transcending the mental plane, leads to rebirth and hence an ascetic should avoid external worship and contemplate on omnipresent divinity. Mahanirvana Tantra, (14.122) also says thus:

उत्तमो ब्रह्मसद्भावो ध्यानभावस्तु मध्यमः ।
स्तुतिर्जपोऽधमोभावो बहिःपूजाधमाधमा ।।

"The highest (spiritual discipline) is the perception of Brahman in all. Meditation is of a medium type of discipline. Chanting of hymns and the repetition of divine name is still of an inferior type. External worship (with the help of idol) is of the lowest type." (Also refer verse 22 of this chapter for various levels of evolution).

अन्तः पूर्णो बहिः पूर्णः पूर्णकुम्भ इवार्णवे ।
अन्तः शून्यो बहिः शून्यः शून्यकुम्भ इवाम्बरे ।।२८।।

(The ascetic) is full within and without, like the water - filled jar submerged in the ocean. He is empty within and without, like an empty jar in open space. (28)

This verse describes the true nature of an Ascetic. The mind of the ascetic having merged in Brahman perceives Brahman everywhere both inside and outside. Thus it is said to be full within and without

like a jar full of water immersed in the ocean. Similarly, the mind of an ascetic that has attained an exalted state of super-consciousness is bereft of all perceptions both inside (subjective perception) and outside (objective perception). Thus it said to be empty within and without like an empty jar in open space.

मा भव ग्राह्यभावात्मा ग्राहकात्मा च मा! भव ।
भावनामखिलां त्यक्तवा यच्छिष्टं तन्मयो भव ।।२९।।

Do not follow the objects of sense perception, do not also become one with the organs of perception. Giving up all ideas (of organs and their objects) become that which remains. (29)

द्रष्टृदर्शनदृश्यानि त्यक्तवा वासनया सह ।
दर्शनप्रथमाभासमात्मानं केवलं भज ।।३०।।

Giving up (the triple consciousness) of seer, seeing and seen along with all the (three) tendencies, (viz. Lokvasana, Sastravasana, Dehavasana) seek only that foremost Atman which is the primal cause of this apparent existence (or which is glorified in all the philosophical system). (30)

सशान्तसर्वसंकल्पा या शिलावदवस्थितिः ।
जाग्रन्निद्राविनिर्मुक्ता सा स्वरूपस्थितिः ।।३१।।

That state in which all thoughts are stilled and (one) remains like a rock (body becomes motionless and stiff because of mind transcendence) being free from the states of waking and sleeping is the state the Self (i.e. the disembodied state called Videha Mukti). (31)

इति द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

Thus ends the second chapter.

तृतीयोऽध्यायः
Third Chapter

DIRECT EXPERIENCES OF SAGE MAITREYA

अहमस्मि परश्चास्मि ब्रह्मास्मि प्रभवोऽस्म्यहम् ।
सर्वलोकगुरूश्चास्मि सर्वलोकोऽस्मि सोऽस्म्यहम् ।।१।।

I am I, I am the transcendental (supreme) one, I am Brahman, I am the source (creator of all), I am also the preceptor of all the worlds, I am all the worlds, I am That. (1)

अहमेवास्मि सिद्धोऽस्मि शुद्धोऽस्मि परमोऽस्म्यहम् ।
अहस्मि सदा सोऽस्मि नित्योऽस्मि विमलोऽस्म्यहम् ।।२।।

I alone am (existing everywhere), I am the accomplished one, I am unsullied, I am the transcendental (supreme), I am everlasting, I am He, I am eternal, I am wholesome. (2)

विज्ञानोऽस्मि विशेषोऽस्मि सोमोऽस्मि सकलोऽस्म्यहम् ।
शुभोऽस्मि शोकहीनोऽस्मि चैतन्योऽस्मि समोऽस्म्यहम् ।।३।।

I am Vijnana (knowledge by comprehensive consciousness), I am the eminent one, I am Soma (nectar formed due to sacrificial offerings or moon), I am the all, I am the auspicious one, I am devoid of sorrow, I am consciousness, I am the impartial (balanced nature) one. (3)

मानावमानहीनोऽस्मि निर्गुणोऽस्मि शिवोऽस्म्यहम् ।
द्वैताद्वैतविहीनोऽस्मि द्वन्द्वहीनोऽस्मि सोऽस्मयहम् ।।४।।

I am beyond honour and dishonour, I am attributeless, I am Siva (God of auspiciousness), I am beyond duality and non-duality, I am free from the pairs of opposites, I am He. (4)

भावाभावविहीनोऽस्मि भाषाहीनोऽस्मि भास्म्यहम् ।
शून्याशून्यप्रभवोऽस्मि शोभनाशोभनोऽस्म्यहम् ।।५।।

I am beyond being and its becoming, I am beyond any language, I am the splendour, I am the mighty power of the void and the non-void, I

am (beyond) auspicious and inauspicious. (5)

तुल्यातुल्यविहीनोऽस्मि नित्यः शुद्धः सदाशिवः ।
सर्वासर्वविहीनोऽस्मि सात्त्विकोऽस्मि सदास्म्यहम् ।।६।।

I am devoid of equality and inequality, (I am) eternal, sacred, ever auspicious; I am free from all and without all, I am virtuous (or Vishnu), I am the absolute existence. (6)

एकसंख्याविहीनोऽस्मि द्विसंख्यावनहं न च ।
सदसद्भेदहीनोऽस्मि संकल्परहितोऽस्म्यहम् ।।७।।

I am beyond the reckoning of one (Purusha) and I am also beyond the reckoning of two (Purusha and Prakriti). I am beyond the distinction of truth and untruth, I am devoid of thought. (7)

नानात्मभेदहीनोऽस्मि ह्यखण्डानन्दविग्रहः ।
नाहमस्मि न चान्योऽस्मि देहादिरहितोऽस्मयहम् ।।८।।

I am beyond the distinction of plurality of souls, I am the embodiment of eternal bliss, I am not (this phenomenal world) nor any other (beyond this world), I am without body, etc. (8)

आश्रयाश्रयिहीनोऽस्मि आधाररहितोऽस्म्यहम् ।
बन्धमोक्षविहीनोऽस्मि शुद्धं ब्रह्मास्मि सोऽस्म्यहम् ।।९।।

I am devoid of the support (cause) and supported (effect), I am without substratum, I am free from bondage and liberation, I am pure Brahman, I am He. (9)

चित्तादिसर्वहीनोऽस्मि परमोऽस्मि परात् परः ।
सदा विचाररूपोऽस्मि निर्विचारोऽस्मि सोऽस्म्यहम् ।।१०।।

I am devoid of all (inner instruments) like reflective mind, etc., I am the supreme, higher than the high, I am of the introspective nature, I am free from thought, I am He. (10)

अकारोकाररूपोस्मि मकारोऽस्मि सनातनः ।
ध्यातृध्यानविहीनोऽस्मि ध्येयहीनोऽस्मि सोऽस्म्यहम् ।।११।।

I am of the form of Akara and Ukara (letter A and U of AUM) and I am Makara (letter M) which is eternal. I am free from (the triple aspect of) meditator, meditation and object of meditation, I am He. (11)

सर्वत्र पूर्णरूपोऽस्मि सच्चिदानन्दलक्षणः ।
सर्वतीर्थस्वरूपोऽस्मि परमात्मास्म्यहम् शिवः ।।१२।।

Being all-pervasive I am the embodiment of the absolute characterised by Being (existence), Awareness (consciousness) and Bliss, I am the embodiment of all the places of pilgrimage, I am the supreme Self, the Siva (auspicious one). (12)

लक्ष्यालक्ष्यविहीनोऽस्मि लयहीनरसोऽस्म्हम् ।
मातृमानविहीनोऽस्मि मेयहीनः शिवोऽस्म्यहम् ।।१३।।

I am beyond determinate and indeterminate, I am the imperishable essence, I am beyond (the triple nature) of measurer, measurement and the thing measured, I am Siva. (13)

न जगत् सर्वद्रष्टास्मि नेत्रादिरहितोऽस्म्यहम् ।
प्रवृद्धोऽस्मि प्रबुद्धोऽस्मि प्रसन्नोऽस्मि हरोऽस्म्यहम् ।।१४।।

I am not this universe (but) the witness of all, I am devoid of organs like eyes etc., I am the mighty one, I am awake, I am serene, I am Hara (Siva). (14)

सर्वेन्द्रियविहीनोऽस्मि सर्वकर्मकृदप्यहम् ।
सर्ववेदान्ततृप्तोऽस्मि सर्वदा सुलभोऽस्म्यहम् ।।१५।।

Being devoid of all the senses I still accomplish all the work, I am the culmination of all the Vedanta, I am always easily attainable (to sincere aspirants). (15)

मुदितामुदिताख्योऽस्मि सर्वमौनफलोऽस्म्यहम् ।
नित्यं चिन्मात्ररूपोऽस्मि सदा सच्चिन्मयोऽस्म्यहम् ।।१६।।

I am the aspect of happiness (for the wise who know my transcendental nature) and sorrow (for the ignorant who are deluded

by Máya), I am the result of all silence (or known in silence), I am the embodiment of eternal consciousness, I am always existence (truth) and awareness (of pure thought). (16)

यत्किंचदपि हीनोऽस्मि स्वल्पमप्यपि नास्मयहम् ।
हृदयग्रन्थिहीनोऽस्मि हृदयाम्वुजमध्यगः ।।१७।।

Whatever is devoid of wholeness (fullness of perfection) I am not even the least of them, I am without the knot of the heart (knots of ego, etc. has been effaced) and I abide in the midst of the lotus of the heart. (17)

षड्विकारविहीनोऽस्मि षट्कोशरहितोऽस्म्यहम् ।
अरिषड्वर्गमुक्तोऽस्मि अन्तरादन्तरोऽस्म्यहम् ।।१८।।

I am free from the six types of distortion, I am devoid of the six sheaths, I am free from the six vices, I am interior than the internal (inner most subtle entity in the heart, i.e. supreme Self). (18)

According to Varha Upanishad (1.8, 9 &10) the six types of distortion are existence, birth, growth, transformation, decay and destruction. The six sheaths are skin, blood, flesh, fat, marrow and bones. The six vices are Kama (passion), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Avarice), Mada (pride), Moha (delusion) and Matsarya (Malice).

देशकालविमुक्तोऽस्मि दिगम्बरसुखोऽस्म्यहम् ।
आस्तिनास्तिविमुक्तोऽस्मि नकाररहितोऽस्म्यहम् ।।१९।।

I am beyond place and time (do not belong to any place and not born in any duration of time), I am the bliss (derived by the sages) who have the directions as their clothing, I am beyond the concept of theist and atheist, I am not evident by the process of negation (i.e. I am the absolute one without any second). (19)

अखण्डाकाशरूपोस्मि ह्यखण्डाकारमस्म्यहम् ।
प्रपञ्चमुक्तचित्तोऽस्मि प्रपञ्चरहितोऽस्म्यहम् ।।२०।।

I am the embodiment of indivisible space and I am of an omnipresent form, I am the reflective mind free from (the impressions of)

phenomenal universe, I am free from the objective universe. (20)

सर्वप्रकाशरूपोऽस्मि चिन्मात्रज्योतिरस्म्यहम् ।
कालत्रयविमुक्तोऽस्मि कामादिरहितोऽस्म्यहम् ।।२१।।

I am the embodiment of all light, I am the light of consciousness, I transcend the triple division of time (past, present and future), I am free from lust, etc. (21)

कायाकायिविमुक्तोऽस्मि निर्गुणः केवलोऽस्म्यहम् ।
मुक्तिहीनोऽस्मि मुक्तोऽस्मि मोक्षहीनोऽस्म्यहं सदा ।।२२।।

I am beyond the body and its indweller (in absence of body consciousness the concept of indweller is superfluous), I am attributeless (and) absolute aloofness, I am eternally free (by nature), I am devoid of (search for) freedom, I am beyond the (seekers of) liberation (i.e. I am the goal of all seekers, viz. liberation itself). (22)

सत्यासत्यविहीनोऽस्मि सन्मात्रान्नास्मयहं सदा ।
गन्तव्यदेशहीनोऽस्मि गमनादिविवर्जितः ।।२३।।

I am devoid of (the idea of) truth and untruth, I am the eternal truth itself and nothing else, I am not bound to go to any place as I am free from movement. (23)

सर्वदा समरूपोऽस्मि शान्तोऽस्मि पुरुषोत्तमः ।
एवं स्वानुभवो यस्य सोऽहमस्मि न संशयः ।
यः श्रृणोति सकृद्वपि ब्रह्मैव भवति स्वयम् ।।२४।।

I am forever of the balanced nature, I am calm, the supreme being; the one who has got a personal experience thus is myself without doubt; He who listens to this (experience of sage) even once (with faith) becomes Brahman himself (i.e. he attains identity with Brahman). (24)

इत्युपनिषत् ।।
Thus (ends) the Upanishad

ॐ तत् सत्



कैवल्योपनिषत्
(KAIVALYA UPANISHAD)*

* The Upanishad delineating the state of Kaivalya

कैवल्योपनिषत्
KAIVALYA UPANISHAD

Introduction:

This Upanishad is the twelfth among the 108 Upanishads and forms a part of the Atharva Veda. As the name suggests, this Upanishad, deals with the ultimate state of Kaivalya leading to liberation. According to Yoga philosophy of Patanjali, Kaivalya is the state of enlightenment where Purusha is established in His real nature of super-consciousness. It is attained by transcending the transcendental state of consciousness (pure consciousness) which is within the Realm of *Prakriti*. Therefore, Purusha is called *Paratpara*, higher than the highest state of *Prakriti* being completely free from the limitations of *Prakriti* comprising of *Gunas* and *Karmas*. In this state, differentiation between *Jivatma* (individual soul) and *Paramatma* (Universal Soul) also disappears.

This Upanishad elucidates that the ultimate state of Kaivalya Mukti is attained through Self-knowledge alone and not through any other means like rituals, worship, etc. For this end, the Upanishad prescribes meditation and self-investigation. It is not enough if one separates *Purusha* from *Prakriti* through Yogic Samadhi or Self-investigation, as the Schools of Sankhya and Yoga believe. The ultimate aim is the non-dual realisation of the Self as identical with all where one sees all in the Self and the Self in all. As long as there is a notion of difference between *Jivatma* and *Parmatma*, Kaivalya Mukti will remain elusive. This Upanishad removes the illusion of Maya and reveals the non-dual nature of the Self. This Upanishad is very valuable for the students of Advaita Vedanta.

This Upanishad commences its exposition with a quest for Brahma Vidya. Sage Ashvalayana, who was a teacher of Rig-Veda, did not find satisfaction in the rituals and sacrifices inculcated by the Vedas. He discovered that virtues inculcated through religious observance of rituals and sacrifices grant only worldly prosperity and not immortality. The Upanishads declare that immortality is attained through knowledge of Brahman alone. He, therefore, begins his quest for Brahma Vidya which destroys all illusion.

This Upanishad is strongly recommended for daily recital for aspirants who belong to the highest order of life (viz., Sannyasa Ashram). However, those who have developed four-fold qualifications (*Sadhana Chatustaya*) but have not yet reached the sate of *Atiashrami* because of a heavy burden of past Karmas will be able to destroy their past sins through the regular study of this Upanishad.

Shanti Mantra:

ॐ सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु । मा विद्विषावहै ।।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।।

May (Brahman) protect us both (the teacher and disciple). May (Brahman) be pleased with us both. May we work together with vigour. May our study be illuminating. May we not hate each other.
Om ! Peace ! Peace ! Peace!

अथाश्वलायनो भगवन्तं परमेष्ठिनमुपसमेत्योवाच-
अधीहि भगवन् ब्रह्मविद्यां वरिष्ठां
सदा सद्भिःसेव्यमानां निगूढाम् ।
ययाऽचिरात् सर्वपापं व्यपोह्य
परात्परं पुरुषं याति विद्वान् ।।१।।

Then (sage) Ashvalayana approached the Lord Brahma (Paramesthi) and said, "O Lord, teach (Adheehi) Brahma Vidya, the supreme (knowledge), always inculcated by the noble, concealed (Nigudam), through which a wise person instantaneously (Achirat) wipes out all sins and attains the Purusha, higher than the highest (Paratpara)". (1)

The word *'Atha'* (then) indicates the prerequisite qualifications for deliberation on the supreme knowledge of Brahman. This word does not indicate a successive state of mind attained after discharging the obligatory duties prescribed in the Vedas. The Upanishads have demonstrated the futility of Vedic Nitya Karmas (obligatory duties) for the attainment of Brahma Vidya because this knowledge is not subservient to the rituals. This knowledge is Self-revealed and can never be the result of any previous actions. Rituals prescribed in the

Vedas grant only worldly prosperity and enjoyment in heaven and do not promise emancipation. Similarly, mere study and reciting of the Vedas is not the sufficient qualification implied here.

A wise person, who has given up all desires to enjoy the fruits of actions, inculcates virtues and purity of mind through the Vedic Rituals and Upasana (worship) which makes him competent for Brahma Vidya. The word '*Atha*' implies here a matured state of mind and intellect attained after discriminating the eternal from the ephemeral, developing dispassion from the enjoyment of the fruits of actions in this world and the next, restraining the mind and the senses, and longing for liberation. These qualifications alone make one eligible for Brahma Vidya.

The sage approached Lord Brahma only after acquiring the fourfold qualification for Brahma Vidya viz., *Viveka* (discrimination), *Vairagya* (dispassion), *Sad Sampada* (six virtues comprising of *Sama, Dama, Uparati, Titiksha, Sraddha* and *Samadhana*) , and *Mumukshutvam* (longing for liberation). This supreme knowledge of Brahman is inaccessible to those who have not acquired this prerequisite qualification. Iswara-consciousness is said to be the highest state from the point of this relative world. The word '*Paratpara*' here means a state higher than the state of Iswara.

Brahma Vidya cannot manifest in one who lacks discrimination. The Chandogya Upanishad (VIII.5.3) describes that this Brahma Vidya is attained though the observance of Brahmacharya. Because for one whose mind has been distracted by the thirst for sense objects, there is no possibility of discriminating knowledge with regard to the innermost Self. Sage Badarayana, in his Brahma Sutra (III.iv.17) mentions that this supreme knowledge belongs to those who are *Urdhvaretas* or those who observe continence; for, this indeed is the teaching of the Vedas. Therefore, now follows the prescription of monastic life.

Renunciation of triple means prescribed in the Vedas:

तस्मै स होवाच पितामहश्च
श्रद्धाभक्तिध्यानयोगादवेहि ।

न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन
त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः ।।२।।

And to him, the Grandsire (Brahma) said, "know this by means of faith, devotion, and meditation. Not by works, not by progeny, nor by wealth, but by renunciation alone, some have attained immortality." (2)

Taittiriya Upanishad describes *'Sraddha'* as a function of the intellect. It is through this faculty that a sincere person understands the true import of scriptural injunctions. *'Bhakti'* is the derivative of love which is associated with the spiritual heart. *'Dhyana Yoga'* is a means to unify these two aspects of the intellect and the heart in order to derive intuitive knowledge. True intuitive knowledge can arise only through the synthesis of psychological views of the intellect and heart. Here the word 'Karma' denotes rites prescribed in the Vedas for attaining various worlds. The school of Mimamsaka believes that liberation or immortality is attained through the performance of Nittya and Naimittika Karmas (obligatory and occasional duties) prescribed in the Vedas. The Mimamsakas justify their proposition by quoting Isa Upanishad, "by doing rituals, indeed, should one wish to live here for hundred years," which enjoins life long performance of rituals. They argue that liberation cannot be attained through knowledge and even if knowledge is accepted, it must be subsidiary to actions or a combination of knowledge and actions. The Mimamsakas quote Shrutis like, "What indeed, one performs with knowledge" (Chandogya Upanishad, I.1.10), "The Brahmana seeks to know it by sacrifice" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, IV.4.22), etc., which show that knowledge is subsidiary to action.

The above verse refutes the proposition of Mimamsakas and affirms that immortality is attained only by renunciation of the triple means prescribed in the Vedas. The Vedic injunction of three means viz., works, progeny, and wealth is applicable for those people who are desirous of heaven. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (I.iv.17) says that an ignorant person not knowing the world of his own inner Self (*Atmaloka*) hankers after threefold means for attaining the world of human beings, manes, and gods. This Upanishad further elaborates that these threefold means are, desire for wife (pre-requisite for performing rites in order to attain the world of human beings), desire

for son (for getting rid of the debt to gods which will enable one to attain the world of gods) and the desire for wealth (for performing rites in order to attain the world of manes). Thus, an ignorant person hankering after these desires attains perishable worlds and not the eternal world of his own inner Self. The Mundaka Upanishad (I.2.7) says thus, "Perishable, indeed, are these eighteen constituents of sacrificial forms." The same Upanishad says in the sequel (I.2.9) that "men engaged in Karma do not understand (the truth)."

The Lord in the Gita (2.70) says that liberation or immortal life is only for the Sannyasin, who has renounced all these desires and is a man of steady wisdom; but not for him who has not renounced and is pursuing the objects of desires. The one who renounces all the desires in their entirety attains the world of Self (*Atma-Loka*) and verily becomes supreme Brahman in this life itself. This is called *Sadyo Mukti* or instantaneous (here and now) liberation. But those aspirants who because of some obstacle, such as desire to enjoy the pleasures of Brahmaloka, fail to attain this *Atma-Loka*, they first attain Brahmaloka after the earthly sojourn and subsequently merge with the supreme Brahman on intuitive realisation of the Self. This is called *Krama Mukti* or gradual liberation. The next verse lays down both of these paths.

परेण नाकं निहितं गुहायां
विभ्राजते यद्यतयो विशन्ति ।
वेदान्तविज्ञांनसुनिश्चितार्थाः
संन्यास योगाद् यतयः शुद्धसत्वाः ।।
ते ब्रह्मलोकेतु परान्तकाले
परामृतात्परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ।।३।।

Higher (Para) than the heaven (Nakam), abiding (Nihit) in the cavity (of the heart), shining brilliantly, into which man of Self restraint (Yati) enter (Vishanti); those man of Self restraint (Yati) who having purified their minds through Sannyasa Yoga have well ascertained through the intuitive knowledge (Vijnana) of the Vedanta; they all enter into Brahma Loka at the time of final end (and attain) the highest immortality being liberated from all (the relative existence). (3)

The word 'Brahma Loka' has got a double meaning in the Upanishads. This heart in the individual being is called Brahma Loka (space which is identified with Brahman) in microcosm. Again, Sathyaloka in macrocosm is also referred to as Brahma Loka (sphere where Brahma dwells). Similarly, *'Paranta Kale'* can also be interpreted to mean final end signifying the final release from the egocentric individuality of the Jiva or great cosmic dissolution of the universe. The word *'Para-Amritah'* means beyond relative immortality. This can be interpreted in two different ways. That embodied soul who dwells in the heart attains supreme immortality of Videha Mukti beyond the relative immortality of Jivan Mukti on disembodiment marked by complete dissolution of the mind. Further, those souls who attain Brahma Loka, they at the time of the great cosmic deluge get released from the relative immortality of Hiranyagarbha and attain absolute immortality on intuitive realisation of Para Brahman. This is the ultimate state of Kaivalya Mukti.

The Upanishidic sages have rejected the common belief of Vedic Rishis that for a man of self-control, his home itself is a hermitage (*Nivritta-Ragasya Graham Tapovanam*). Instead, the Upanishadic sages insist in unequivocal terms that a man of self–control must also renounce home or family life so as to live a life of contemplation.

Those monks, who have well ascertained the meaning of Vedanta, go to the realm of Brahman and are released at the end of the great cycle. But those who are unable to ascertain the true import of Vedanta through investigation and enquiry because of dull intellect should meditate on the Brahman with or without attributes. Meditation awakens the higher faculties of mind and intellect which enhances the power of discrimination. Self-Knowledge arises because of better understanding of bondage and liberation through meditation. This Upanishad now prescribes meditation on Brahman.

The Path of Meditation:

विविक्तदेशे च सुखासनस्थः
शुचिः समग्रीवशिरः शरीरः ।।४।।

Seeking a solitary place (Viviktadesh), sitting in a comfortable

posture, maintaining internal and external purity and keeping the neck, head and body erect; (4)

This verse prescribes that a man of self-restraint should resort to a solitary place for meditation on the Self or Brahman. This injunction of the Upanishad is quite opposed to the injunction of the Vedas wherein one must accompany wife for performance of rites to acquire various worlds other than the Self. The word 'solitary place' implies here that the seeker of knowledge must give up all sense of possessions and practice concentration of the mind. The Bhagavad-Gita (6.10) also says:

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीपरिग्रहः ।।६.१०।।

"A Yogi should constantly concentrate his mind by staying in a solitary place, with mind and body controlled, free from expectations and free from possession." The Bhagavad-Gita (XIII.10) further elaborates that constancy in spiritual knowledge is possible only for those who develop distaste for the society of man and resort to solitary places.

The prerequisite qualification for meditation on Brahman is external and internal purification of the being. In fact there is only one path, the path of purity which leads to divinity. External purity is related to the body and its external environment while internal purity is related to the mind and internal environment. The Upanishads have prescribed practice of Praanayam for internal and external purity. When one repeats with prolonged breath three times the Gayatri with its seven Vyahritis and *Pranava* along with *Siras* joining after it, one destroys impurities of the body and mind. The Vedas have also laid down many purificatory rites for external and internal purifications. One must first acquire external and internal purity through Karma Yoga and Karma Sannyasa (disinterested performance of actions without any bounden duty) and then give up all scriptural duties also being intent on the absorption in Brahman.

The Bhagavad-Gita (6.11) stipulates that a Yogi seeking success in Dhyana Yoga should firmly establish himself in a clean place on a seat which is neither too high nor too low, and made of cloth, skin and *Kusa-grass*, places successively one below the other. Posture should be steady and comfortable for prolong meditation. This Upanishad

lays down that during meditation neck, head and body should be held erect in one line *(Sama-Griva-Sirah-Sarirah)*. Vertebral column should be perpendicular to the plane of Asana (seat) for steady posture. This facilitates ascent of Kundalini Shakti. The Bhagavad-Gita (6.13) also lays down the guidelines for posture of the body.

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ।।६.१३।।

"Holding the body, head and neck erect and still, gazing at the tip of the nose, fixing the mind in the Self, (Yogi should) not look around." Svetasvatra Upanishad (II.8) also stipulates similar injunction for meditation thus, "Holding the body in balance, with three limbs (head, chest and body) erect."

The scriptures say that through the meditation on the infinite, posture is made steady. Further, it is only a purified mind that can be steady and qualified for meditation. Through meditation, the mind is rendered pure being free from all modifications. Thus, there is a cyclic cause and effect relationship between the external and internal nature of the being. The next verse prescribes the method of meditation on Brahman for those who have given up duties prescribed for various stages of life (i.e. monks) and have become passionless and free from vices.

अत्याश्रमस्थः सकलेन्द्रियाणि
निरुध्य भक्त्या स्वगुरुं प्रणम्य ।
हृत्पुण्डरीकं विरजं विशुद्धं
विचिन्त्य मध्ये विशदं विशोकम् ।।५।।

Transcending (Ati) all Ashramas (stages of life), restraining all the senses, reverentially saluting (mentally or physically) ones own preceptor (in visible or invisible form), one should meditate in the center of the lotus of the heart, (which is) untainted (Virajam-passionless), ever pure (Vishuddam- free from vices), shining (Vishadam), (and) bereft of sorrow (Vishokam). (5)

The above verse mentions that the aspirant of Kaivalya Mukti should transcend all man made Ashrama Dharma and embrace the highest order of life of Paramhamsa. The Narada Parivrajaka Upanishad (3.21) says that he in whom *Santi* (sense-control), *Sama* (mind-

control), *Soucha* (purity of mind and body), *Sathya* (truth), *Santosha* (contentment), *Aarjava* (honesty), *Akinchana* (disinterestedness in money matter) and non-ostentatiousness are ever present, is qualified for the order of life of *Kaivalya (Sannyasa)*. A Paramhamsa having known the limitations of all Ashrama Dharmas, gives them up and withdraws into a solitary place deeply meditating on the lotus of the heart. *Narayana Suktam* describes the meditation on this lotus of the heart which is the seat of Savikalpa Samadhi. Meditating on this a Yogi gets a vision of brilliantly shining light. This lotus of the heart is ever pure because it is infinite and homogenous bereft of the dual phenomena of the world. Experiencing the bliss of seclusion in this non-dual state, a Yogi becomes free from all sorrows. He feels thus, "Whatever has to be done has been done. There is no more bondage of birth and death." He does not feel sorry for not having performed any duty towards his parents or family. He derives a great satisfaction by living a holy life of homelessness.

The next Sloka describes meditation on the absolute Brahman.

Formless Meditation:

अचिन्त्यमव्यक्तमनन्तरूपं
शिवं प्रशान्तममृतं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।
तथाऽऽदिमध्यान्तविहीनमेकं
विभुं चिदानन्दमरूपमद्भुतम् ।।६।।

(Absolute Brahman is) incomprehensible (beyond the reach of mind and intellect), unmanifested (beyond the purview of sense perception), infinite in form, auspicious (free from the causes of evil), eternally tranquil (beyond the turbulence of cosmic forces), immortal (undecaying), cause of the very creator (Brahma), without beginning, middle and end (not conditioned by time), the only one, omnipresent (Vibhum), consciousness (having power over mind and matter), bliss (free from sorrow), formless and supernatural (thus one should realise the absolute Brahman through formless meditation). (6)

Absolute (*Nirguna)* Brahman transcends Prakriti comprising of all names and forms. He is unmanifested and formless and has to be realised through formless meditation. Here the consciousness of the

meditator does not cling to any name and form for support. He does not delight in any thing external to his own Self. He becomes independent and attains the absolute Brahman.

Brahman is beyond the subject-object relationship of the intellect *(Achintya)*. In Brahman, the knower, known and knowledge, all merge in one state and hence the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (II.iv.14) says that inspite of knowing, one does not know Him, for there is no second whom one can know. This non-dual nature of absolute Brahman is said to be the most auspicious *(Sivam)* because it is free from all the causes of evil. Since Brahman transcends *Prakriti,* He is beyond the turbulence of Gunas or cosmic forces. He is the eternal Truth and hence described as eternally tranquil *(Prasantham)*. This Truth is the basis of creative power. Thus, the absolute Brahman is said to be the origin of the very creator *(Brahma Yoni)*. Since the Brahman is infinite, It can be only one without a second for, two infinite cannot coexist. If we accept two infinite entities, one will limit the other and thus cease to be infinite. Thus, Brahman is all-pervasive *(Vibhum)* and non-dual *(Ekam)*.

However, those aspirants who are unable to realise the absolute Brahman through formless meditation should contemplate on the *Saguna* (conditioned) Brahman in his formful aspects as described in the next verse.

Formful Meditation:

उमासहायं परमेश्वरं प्रभुं
त्रिलोचनं नीलकण्ठं प्रशान्तम्
ध्यात्वा मुनिर्गच्छति भूतयोनिं
समस्तसाक्षिं तमसः परस्तात् ।।७।।

(Conditioned Brahman is) associated with creative power (Uma), mighty (Prabhu), the supreme Lord (Param Iswara), three eyed one (omniscient or having knowledge of three division of time), blue necked (who absorbed the poison of Vasanas), eternally tranquil; meditating (thus on the conditioned Brahman) a sage attains Him who is the source of entire creation, witness of everything, and beyond darkness (of manifested world). (7)

Absolute Brahman has no cognition of creation. He is bereft of any idea of time and space. *Nirguna* Brahman, when perceived in association with His creative power *(Uma)*, is called *Saguna* Brahman or *Parameswara*. Here *Parameswara* symbolises the Purusha, the consciousness and Uma symbolises the Prakriti, the primordial matter. Space and time exist only in the Saguna Brahman. He is the supreme Lord *(Param Prabhu)* of the universe having the vision of the triple divisions of time represented by the Third Eye *(Trilochan)* which encompasses the entire creation. When a Yogi concentrates his mental faculties, there arises a tug of war (churning) between the subconscious desires for an ego-centric life and soul aspirations for a divine life. *Parameswara* is the indweller of all beings who protects the individuals from poison of desires emitted in this process of churning, by swallowing it and not allowing it to afflict the heart and intellect of the being. He held the poison in His throat which turned blue and thus He has been described as blue necked *(Neelkantha)*. Saguna Brahman is, though conditioned, yet not temporal. He is not subject to the continuous flux of the phenomenal world. He is eternally tranquil *(Prasantham)*. By meditating on the supreme Lord, a Yogi goes beyond the darkness of the manifested world. Formful meditation raises the individual consciousness to the plane of Iswara-Consciousness which is beyond the Hiranyagarbha-Consciousness. Iswara-Consciousness is the source of the manifested world *(Bhuta Yonim)* or Hiranyagarbha and very often referred to as Transcendental Consciousness.

In *Sagunopasana*, this Transcendental Reality which is beyond the comprehension of the mind and description by the speech is comprehended and extolled through the mind and speech. During the initial stage, *Sagunopasana* takes the form of external worship performed with the help of mystical symbols or idols of various deities. Gradually this worship becomes internal and mental where formful aspects of the deities merge with the formless aspects of Brahman. Thus, *Sagunopasana* finally culminates in the experience of all-pervasive Transcendental Reality as explained in the next verse.

स ब्रह्मा स शिवः सेन्द्रः सोऽक्षरः परमः स्वराट् ।
स एव विष्णुः स प्राणः स कालोऽग्निः स चन्द्रमाः ।।८।।

He (Iswara Consciousness) is Brahma, He is Shiva, He is Indra, He is

imperishable (Akshar), the supreme (Param), the Self-effulgent (Svarat), He alone is Vishnu, He is Praana, He is Time and Fire. He is the Moon. (8)

The above verse refers to the Transcendental-Consciousness associated with the Iswara and not to the Super-Consciousness associated with the Absolute Brahman. Both of these states are non-dual and all-pervasive, placed like the warp and woof. However, Transcendental Consciousness is conditioned by cause alone while Super-Consciousness is bereft of any cause. Absolute Brahman is devoid of causal relationships like originating, sustaining, and dissolving the universe which are the functions of Trinity viz. Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. It is the Iswara who bestows blessings on the *Sagunaopasakas* in the form of various deities. The entire manifested universe merges in the Iswara-Consciousness at the end of each cycle of creation. But the Iswara-Consciousness remains unchanged and hence He is described as imperishable. He is the master of creation who manifests the creation through His Maya Shakti thus He is described as Supreme and Self-effulgent. Various names and forms do not limit His all-pervasive nature. Formful meditation on the deities leads to an identity with the all-pervasive transcendental reality of Iswara Consciousness. This experience of transcendental reality brings about the cessation of all sufferings arising due to attachment to sense objects. Identification with this all-pervasive transcendental reality bestows happiness and destroys afflictions *(Klesha)* of the body and mind. However, since the consciousness of the meditator clings to Iswara-Consciousness and delights in it, he does not attain independence or Kaivalya of Super-Consciousness state called *Turiya*. Immortality of Absolute Brahman is only for those who transcend this relatively highest immortality through Self-knowledge.

Kaivalya Mukti is through Self-knowledge alone:

स एव सर्वं यद्भूतं यच्च भव्यं सनातनम् ।
ज्ञात्वा तं मृत्युमत्येति नान्यः पन्था विमुक्तये ।।९।।

He alone is all that was, and all that will be, the Eternal; by knowing Him (through Self-knowledge) one transcends death. There is no other path to liberation.

The definite conclusion of Vedanta is that immortality is attained through the intuitive realisation of Brahman alone. Meditation only helps in the purification of the consciousness which enhances the power of discrimination of the intellect. Immortal life belongs to those who discriminate between the transient and the eternal and turn their minds inward in the heart by renouncing all other desires.

The next verse describes the absolute liberation (Kaivalya) which is attained here and now without any necessity to follow any path outside one's own Self.

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
सम्पश्यन् ब्रह्म परमं याति नान्येन हेतुना ।।१०।।

By seeing the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self, one attains the supreme Brahman. There is no other means (for liberation here and now).

The Annapurna Upanishad (V.79-80) also says that when one beholds all beings in one's own Self and one's own Self in all beings, one becomes Brahman. Thus absorbed in Samadhi, with consciousness merged in the Supreme, one beholds no beings, that very moment one attains Kaivalya (aloofness).

The entire philosophy behind Kaivalya (Monasticism) is that the seekers of immortality should ceaselessly meditate on Brahman by giving up all other activities (duties pertaining to various orders of life as prescribed in the Vedas) in order to attain absorption in Brahman. This has been further elaborated in the Chandogya Upanishad (II.23). This Upanishad clarifies that the householders who perform sacrifice, study and charity, the students who take the vows of life long celibacy *(Naisthikah Brahmachari)* dedicating themselves to disciplined life at the preceptor's residence (Ashram), and the forest dwellers who perform penance (like *Chandrayana*, etc.) including the monks belonging to fourth order, all these attain virtuous worlds (world of gods). However, the one who remains fully established in Brahman attains immortality (beyond the relative immortality of the world of gods). This Upanishad also makes it clear that those students who observe celibacy only for the sake of the study of the Vedas, there cannot be any attainment of the virtuous worlds through celibacy and

mere study of the Vedas. They must practise Vedic Dharma through out their lives. The same Upanishad says in sequel that a person who has become *Atiashrami* (beyond any order of life) through realisation of Brahman, alone attains immortality and not the others.

Prescription of Pranava Upasana:

The absolute Brahman who is bereft of all superimpositions can be realised only by competent students having sharp intellect. However, students with mediocre intellect who are unable to attain the above said vision of non-duality through discriminative knowledge and meditation should awaken this unified vision by constant practice of knowledge in association with the Pranava Upasana. The next verse prescribes constant practice of knowledge with the help of Pranava Upasana in order to awaken this non-dual consciousness.

आत्मानमरणिं कृत्वा प्रणवं चोत्तरारणिम् ।
ज्ञाननिर्मथनाभ्यासात् पाशं दहति पण्डितः ।।११।।

Making the Atman (inner organs - mind, intellect, Chitta and ego) as (the lower) Arani (wood piece used for churning fire) and Pranava as the upper Arani, by constant friction of knowledge, a wise man burns up all the fetters. (11)

Constant meditation on the Self through the negation of all superimpositions like 'I am not the mind', I am not the intellect', 'I am not the reflective mind (Chitta)', I am not the ego', etc., is called *Jnana Manthana* (churning of knowledge). This Upanishad advises that this process of negation should be supplemented by the meditation on *Aum* as the symbol of the ultimate reality of the Self.

The Dhyanabindu Upanishad describes that Pranava consisting of three *Matra* (articulated letters) A, U, and M along with *Ardha-Matra* (unarticulated humming sound) called Nada and Bindu is an eternal reverberating sound. What exists beyond this is the soundless (Amatra) Brahman who is the substratum of the entire existence. Sri Gaudapadacharya in his Mandukya Karika (I.29) says that the one, who has known *Aum* which is soundless and of infinite sounds and which is ever-peaceful on account of the negation of duality, is the real sage. The Mandukya Upanishad explains that the Pranava

consisting of the three letters A, U, M and the fourth letter which is soundless correspond to the four states of consciousness viz., Visva (objective consciousness of waking state), Taijasa (subjective consciousness of dream state), Prajna (transcendental consciousness of deep sleep state) and Turiya (super consciousness or the Self). This soundless state of Turiya is the ultimate reality. He who knows *Aum* as *soundless* and non-dual merges his self in the Self.

Self-investigation through four states of consciousness:

The seer of this Upanishad, who is none other than the Lord Brahma (Paramesthi), now reveals the nature of the Self by analysing the three states of consciousness and then refuting all other superimpositions on the Self which arise due to misapprehension or non-apprehension of the reality. During waking and dreaming state, there is a misapprehension of the reality due to the identification of the embodied soul with the false entities like body and mind. During deep sleep, there is non-apprehension of the reality since the soul abides in the causal state and remains unaware of both external and internal. It is only in the fourth state of Turiya that the soul becomes free from the nescience of cause and effect and realises the true nature of the Self.

स एव मायापरिमोहितात्मा
शरीरमास्थाय करोति सर्वम् ।
स्त्रियन्नपानादिविचित्रभोगैः
स एव जाग्रत्परितृप्तिमेति ।।१२।।

He (Jiva) alone, under the nescience of Maya, identifying with the body does everything. He alone derives gratification in the waking state from the various objects of enjoyment like women, food, drink, etc. (12)

During the waking state, there is mis-apprehension of the reality because of the false identification of the Jiva with the gross body. Identifying with this body, the Jiva comes under the delusion of the empirical reality of the sense objects. He exerts himself to possess those sense objects which gives him pleasure and avoids those objects, which gives him pain. The Mahopanishad (V.87) says, "Though intellectual, though highly qualified and very learned, though born in a

superior clan and a person of great repute, one is bound by the cravings of the body (e.g. *Dhanehsna, Dareshna* and *Putreshna*), like as a lion with a chain." Attachment and clinging to sense objects brings about a downfall from the spiritual consciousness because of which the Jiva gets drowned in the material consciousness. Under the impulsive force of this material consciousness, the Jiva perceives the world to be real. This mis-apprehension of the reality continues as long as attachment with the gross body persists.

The mis-apprehension has to be eliminated through self-investigation and meditation. The material and objective universe is the result of the involution of consciousness. The purpose of meditation is to reverse this process of involution by withdrawing into the higher state of consciousness. The embodied soul then becomes aware of the vast and subtle planes of consciousness. Meditation awakens higher faculties of the mind and intellect which liberates the soul from the confinement of material consciousness.

स्वप्ने स जीवः सुखदुःखभोक्ता
स्वमायया कल्पितजीवलोके ।
सषुप्तिकाले सकले विलीने
तमोऽभिभूतिः सुखरूपमेति ।।१३।।

The same Jiva experiences pleasure and pain in dream by projecting an imaginary world of beings through his power of Maya. During the deep sleep state when everything is dissolved (in their causal state), he, being identified with the nescience (of primal cause), exists in his quiescent form. (13)

During the dream state, the soul confined in the subtle body perceives subjective reality in an internal world. In this state of perception, time and space lose their true significance. There is no space yet the dreaming person travels far and wide through various vehicles in no time. There are no concrete forms yet the dreaming person experiences pain or pleasure by imagining *(Kalpana)* various forms within because of past impressions. Thus, reality perceived in the external (waking state) and internal (dreaming state) worlds is illusory. In deep sleep, the soul confined in the causal body gets absorbed in the primal cause. This primal cause is described here as

Tamas because the soul remains in a dormant state being unaware of its true nature. Though the embodied soul experiences bliss yet this state is illusory because of non-apprehension of the reality. This differentiates the Sushupti state from Samadhi wherein the soul experiences absolute bliss because of enlightenment. Super- conscious realisation of the Self in Samadhi obliterates all latent impressions while in the state of Sushupti these impressions lie in a latent state and the soul comes back to the waking or the dreaming state to experience the results of its past accumulated actions.

पुनश्च जन्मान्तरकर्मयोगात्
स एव जीवः स्वपिति प्रबुद्धः ।
पुरत्रये क्रीडति यश्च जीव-
स्ततस्तु जातं सकलं विचित्रम् ।।
आधारमानन्दमखण्डबोधं
यस्मिंल्लयं याति पुरत्रयं च ।।१४।।

Again, due to the result of actions performed in the previous births that very same Jiva enters into dream state or waking state. That Jiva, who sports in the three bodies (gross, subtle, and causal) and from whom has emerged this entire manifold creation. He is the substratum, indivisible bliss awareness and in him alone, all the three bodies get dissolved. (14)

Having refuted the reality perceived in the three states, this Upanishad now avers that the embodied soul, who is the witness of all the three states, is the sole cause of the entire existence. It is the soul who experiences peace in deep sleep because of the absence of all impressions and says 'I had sound sleep'. The Upanishad later in verse 16 will affirm that the soul is identical with the Self-luminous Atma. The soul alone is the substratum of all the three states. It is the soul who cognises various objects by imagining them in himself through power of his own Maya. The Upanishads have refuted thus the proposition of absolute nihilism who maintain that all categories of experiences, viz., knower, known and knowledge are mere illusion. If the experiences of knower, known and knowledge are treated as mere illusion being devoid of reality, who is the real cogniser of these triple modes? The theory of the non-existence of Atman is unacceptable; for, it is the Atma who is the substratum of all knowledge, memory,

and relative perceptions like Jiva, Iswara and the world. The conclusion of Vedanta is that the knowledge and memory are not without any support (independent of any basis) as Buddhistic nihilists maintain. The next verse further confirms this faith in the existence of Atma from which emerge all manifold entities like Praana, mind, space, etc.

एतस्माज्ञायते प्राणो मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च ।
खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी ।।१५।।

From Him emerges Praana (life principle), the mind, all the senses (of cognition and perception), the space (Ether), the air, the light (radiation or fire), water (liquid state), the earth (solid state) which supports all. (15)

The Self was described as unconditioned, formless and beyond cause and effect in the previous few verses. This verse, which is also found in the Mundaka Upanishad (II.i.3), describes the Self through positive epithets. It presents the Self in the conditioned state as a cause of the subtle state of Hiranyagarbha. This Hiranyagarbha is the cause of the universe in the gross form called Viraat. Thus, both views are essential to arrive at the integral knowledge of the Self. For perfect knowledge and absolute liberation, we must see the Being (unconditioned Brahman) and all it's Becoming (conditioned Brahman) in absolute identity with the indwelling Self through an integral vision. We cannot arrive at the integral knowledge of the Self by either of the two exclusive views.

Realisation of the non-dual Self:

Ignorant people are convinced that happiness and sorrow which they experience in this world and heaven are real. Therefore, they consider worldly duties and obligations inculcated by the Vedas as real. They do not perceive non-duality, nor think it exists. They hanker not for non-dual Truth but for enjoyments. Their concept of God and liberation is related to the lower and qualified Brahman (Apara Brahman). But *Atiashrami* who has renounced all desires of enjoyment in this world and heaven devote himself to the higher and absolute Brahman which grants Kaivalya Mukti. The seer of this Upanishad *(Paramesthi)* having initiated the disciple *(sage*

Ashvalayana) into *Atiashrama* (Sannyasa) now imparts *Mahavakya.* A disciple who wishes to destroy the illusion of the dualistic universe should listen (Shravanam) this *Mahavakya* that reveals the integral knowledge of the Sèlf.

यत्परं ब्रह्म सर्वात्मा विश्वस्यायतनं महत् ।
सूक्ष्मात्सूक्ष्मतरं नित्यं तत्त्वमेव त्वमेव तत् ।।१६।।

That which is the supreme Brahman, inner Self of all, the great support of the universe, subtler than the subtle, and eternal- That alone thou art, thou alone art That. (16)

"Tat Tvameva Tvameva Tat - That alone though art, thou alone art that"- is the supreme utterance (Mahavakya) of the seer of this Upanishad. Kaivalya is attained only by realising the identity of inner Self and Brahman. Brahman is subtler than the subtle because it pervades even the unmanifested ether or space. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (III.vii.12) further says, "*He who inhabits the ether, but is within it, whom the ether does not know, whose body is the ether, and who controls the ether from within, is the Internal Ruler, your own immortal Self.*" This Upanishad demonstrates that the entire dualistic universe comprising of space, air, fire, water, earth, light, sun, moon, stars and all beings can be unified in Brahman. This Supreme Brahman, who is the great support of the universe, is identical with immortal Self of the individual.

Now the teacher exhorts the disciple to reflect upon the inner meaning of the Mahavakya through discrimination in order to assimilate *(Mananam)* feeling of identity of the inner Self and Brahman.

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्त्यादिप्रपञ्चं यत्प्रकाशते ।
तद्ब्रह्माहमिति ज्ञात्वा सर्वबन्धैः प्रमुच्यते ।।१७।।

"That which illumines the relative phenomena in waking, dreaming, deep sleep state, etc.; that Brahman am I" – knowing thus one is liberated from all fetters. (17)

Brahman illumines the relative phenomena of object and subject in all the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. Brahman is ever pure and auspicious because it is not tainted by the anything during

the triple states. It is the intellect which differentiates between subject and object; considers itself as enjoyer or doer; and experiences pleasure or pain. Because of this fault in the intellect a person perceives the universe of multitudes and finds no way to escape from the worldly sorrow. When the objective and subjective perceptions are eliminated through meditation on Brahman, the intellect intuitively realises that the real 'I' is the imperishable Brahman and not the doer or enjoyer. Knowing thus one is released from all bondages.

The disciple being intent on the intuitive realisation of the Self now takes to the recourse of deep meditation *(Nididhyasanam)*. The next few verses describe the personal experiences of the disciple in the depth of meditation.

त्रिषु धामसु यद्भोग्यं भोक्ता भोगश्च यद्भवेत् ।
तेभ्यो विलक्षणः साक्षी चिन्मात्रोऽहं सदाशिवः ।।१८।।

That which appears as the enjoyable, enjoyer and enjoyment in the three states (Dhamsu), different (Vilakshnah) from all that am I, the witness, the ever auspicious (and) pure consciousness. (18)

The above verse describes the experience of disciple in meditation on attributeless Brahman through elimination of objective universe. In this method, the soul withdraws itself from all the objective experiences through intuitive discernment. In absence of objective impressions, the mind is rendered pure and gets illuminated through the light of Self-effulgent Atma. This type of meditation is always associated with the luminous discriminative ideas like 'I am the witness', etc. Brahman is the eternal witness of triple modes of relative experiences (viz., enjoyer, enjoyment and object of enjoyment) in all the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. It is the intellect which considers itself as enjoyer and feels pleasure or pain. Brahman is ever pure and auspicious because it is not tainted by the sins of the doer.

मय्येव सकलं जातं मयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
मयि सर्वं लयं याति तद्ब्रह्माद्वयमस्म्यहम् ।।१९।।

Everything emerges from me alone; in me, everything abides; in me,

everything merges. I am that non-dual Brahman. (19)

The absolute Brahman has no cognition of creation. It is the Brahmic consciousness which perceives all the relative phenomena of the creation. Having identified himself with this all permeating Brahmic consciousness, a Paramhamsa feels that the entire creation emerges from him, having emerged it abides in him and finally merges back in him. He remains unaffected by the relative phenomena of the creation. The Svetasvatara Upanishad (IV.16) also says that by realising the God who is only one and who encompasses the entire world, a person is released from all fetters. Here "I" refers to the impersonal truth of Non-dual Self and not body-miṇd-ego complex of the embodied soul.

अणोरणीयानहमेव तद्वन्-
महानहं विश्वमहं विचित्रम् ।
पुरातनोऽहं पुरुषोऽहमीशो
हिरण्मयोऽहं शिवरूपमस्मि ।।२०।।

I am minuter than the minute, similarly (Tadvat) I am also the mightiest among all; I am the manifold (Vichitram- confounding) universe; I am the ancient one; I am the Purusha, the Lord (Isa) of all beings; I am the effulgent (Hiranyamaya) one, I am of the nature of auspiciousness. (20)

The above verse describes experiences of disciple in meditation on Iswara, who is the internal ruler *(Isa)* of all beings. Being more subtle than the all-pervasive Hiranyagarbha, Iswara pervades and encompasses it. Hiranyagarbha is 'true' from the point of this cycle of creation. But Iswara who is superior to Hiranyagarbha is 'true' from the point of view of endless cycles of creation and hence He is said to be auspicious. He existed even before the manifestation of Hiranyagarbha and therefore He is the ancient one.

अपाणिपादोऽहमचिन्त्यशक्तिः
पश्याम्यचक्षुः स श्रृणोम्यकर्णः ।
अहं विजानामि विविक्तरूपो
न चास्ति वेत्ता मम चित्सदाऽहम् ।।२१।।

I am without hands and feet (Apani-Padah); of incomprehensible

power; I see without eyes (Achakshuh), hear without ears (Akarnah), I know (everything in its essential nature) being bereft of all forms (Vivikta Rupah), and there is no knower (Vetta) for me (or none knows me) who am ever of the nature of consciousness. (21)

The Svetasvatara Upanishad (III.19) also says, "Without hands and feet, It goes fast and grasps; without eyes it sees; without ears It hears. It knows whatever is to be known, yet there in none who knows It. They say He is the foremost, the great Infinite Being". This Brahmic Consciousness knows everything through the principle of Prajnana but there is none who knows It. The soul identifying itself with the Brahmic Consciousness enters into something beyond which is unknown to the mind and intellect.

वेदैरनेकैरहमेव वेद्यो
वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ।
न पुण्यपापे मम नास्ति नाशो
न जन्म देहेन्द्रियबुद्धिरस्ति ।।२२।।

I alone (eva) am (That who is) to be known (Veidhyo) from different Vedas (Vedaih Anekaih); I am the revealer of Vedanta (Vedanta Krit), and I alone (eva) am the knower of the Vedas (Veda Vid); there is no merit or sin for me, I am indestructible; I have neither birth nor any notion of body, senses and intellect. (22)

The Vedas reveal the eternal Truth. He who knows the Truth is the knower of the Vedas. Others who have not known the Truth lead *Dharmika* way of life practising the prescribed rituals in the Vedas for acquiring merits and destroying sins. However, the seer of the Vedas by knowing the Self completely shakes of all sins and merits. Having realised his identity with the indestructible Self, he transcends all false identification with the body, senses, mind and intellect.

न भूमिरापो न च वह्निरस्ति
न चानिलो मेऽस्ति न चाम्बरं च ।
एवं विदित्वा परमात्मरूपं
गुहाशयं निष्कलमद्वितीयम्।।२३।।
समस्तसाक्षिं सदसद्विहीनं
प्रयाति शुद्धं परमात्मरूपम् ।।२४।।

There is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor ether. Knowing (Viditva) thus (evam) the nature of supreme Self (Parmatma Rupam), who resides in the cavity (of the heart), who is partless (Niskalam), non-dual (Advitiyam), witness of all (Samast Sakshi), beyond existence and non-existence (Sad-Asad-Vihinam); one attains (Prayati) the pure nature of Supreme Self. (23&24)

The disciple having clearly discriminated the real from the unreal through meditation on the Self realises that uncreated, uncompounded, and undissolved principle which is beyond existence and non-existence. This created universe made of five spiritual elements does not exist in the pure Self. Iswara is the supreme lord of the universe. But a Paramhamsa having renounced even the lordly powers of Iswara remains absorbed in the meditation of non-dual Brahman and attains pure nature of Supreme Self. He having realised the absolute Brahman in Nirvikalpa Samadhi goes beyond the notions of Iswara and Jiva and feels supreme satisfaction. This ultimate experience derived in the depth of Samadhi destroys all illusions of creation and creator.

इति प्रथमः खण्डः ।।

Thus ends first part

The aim of this Upanishad is to liberate the soul from all sins and limitations through Self-realisation. Jiva (embodied soul) being ignorant of the Self identifies himself with body and considers himself powerless. He perceives the world of multiplicity and superimposes goodness and badness on things. He develops love and hatred based on his likes and dislikes. Impelled by desire and aversion he performs various deeds and accumulates merits and sins. Thus, worldly life of sorrow and joy continues unabated. Burdened with these accumulated merits and sins, a person fails to realise the Self. In the second part of the Upanishad, *Phala Shruti* is described to inspire the seekers to give up all the false superimpositions on the Self and become free from all the notions of sins.

यः शतरुद्रीयमधीते सोऽग्निपूतो भवति सुरापानात्पूतो भवति
कृत्याकृत्यात्पूतो भवति तस्मादविमुक्तमश्रितो भवति ।

He who studies (Adhite) this Sata Rudriya, is purified by fires (Agni-

Putah), is purified from the sin of drinking wine (Sura-Panat), is purified from the (wrong) deeds performed unknowingly (Kritya-Akritya). Through study of this Upanishad (Tasmat), he attains refuge in the Avimukta (the one who never deviates from Truth-Consciousness and it refers to Iswara).

This Upanishad, also known as Brahma Sata-Rudriya, is as sacred to the seekers of liberation (Kaivalyam) as Sata–Rudriya of Taittiriya Samhita of Yajur Veda to the devotees of the Siva. Mere intellectual knowledge of the Kaivalya Upanishad can remove the heavy burden of Karmic bondage because of which most of the aspirants become averse to the knowledge of the Self and cling to rituals. The study of this Upanishad destroys all those sins which are committed unknowingly provided a person takes a resolve not to commit sin anymore. The Vedas do not protect a hypocrite person. Such a person, who has taken a right resolve after giving up the wrong way of life, attains refuge in the *Avimukta.* Brahman in the form of *Iswara,* possessed of attributes, is called *Avimukta*. The Jabala Upanishad describes *Avimukta* as a place between the eyebrows called *Varanasi* where sins committed by the ten sense organs are destroyed.

अत्याश्रमी सर्वदा सकृद्वा जपेत् ।।
अनेन ज्ञानमाप्नोति संसारार्णवनाशनम् ।
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं कैवल्यं फलमश्नुत इति ।।१।।

The one who is an Atiashrami (beyond all stages of life i.e., monk of the highest order), should always (Sarvada) or once a day (Sakrit) recite this (Brahma-Sata-Rudriya). By means of this (Anena), one attains knowledge that destroys the ocean (Arnava) of Samsara (worldly life). Therefore (Tasmat), knowing thus (Viditva-evam), one attains (Asnute) the fruit of Kaivalya (absolute liberation), verily one attains liberation. (1)

इति द्वितीयः खण्डः ।।

Thus ends the second part.

इत्यथर्ववेदे कैवल्योपनिषत्समाप्ता ।।

Thus ends the Kaivalya Upanishad belonging to the Atharva Veda.

निर्वाणोपनिषत्
(Nirvanopanishad)*

*The Upanishad delineating Nirvana.

निर्वाणोपनिषत्

NIRVANOPANISHAD

Introduction:

This Upanishad belonging to the Rig Veda is the forty seventh among the 108 Upanishads. This Upanishad delineates the characteristics of a *Paramhamsa Parivrajaka* who has realised the Self and has taken to the life of mendicancy after giving up all obligatory duties. A *Paramhamsa* is one who is free from all kinds of worldly desires and can discriminate between the eternal and the transient, the real and the unreal, and the sentient and the insentient. He goes from place to place as a *Parivrajaka* without having any settled place to stay. Through this Yoga of renunciation he becomes pure being bereft of all sins and remains absorbed in the non-duality of the Self.

This Upanishad expounds the highest principles of the life of a *Jivanmiukta* (liberated while alive) by way of aphorisms (*Sutras*). This state of *Jivan Mukti* is higher than any other state described in the various schools of Bhakti and Yoga. Although this Upanishad is specially meant for wandering monks who have renounced the world, it can be studied even by those who have not yet taken to mendicancy but have developed inner renunciation (*Antar-Sannyasa*). However, this Upanishad categorically states that realisation of the absolute Self is possibly only for *Paramhamsa Parivrajaka*. This realisation itself is *Nirvana*.

Shanti Mantra:

ॐ वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितमाविरावीर्म एधि ।
वेदस्य म आणीस्थः श्रुतं मे मा प्रहासीरनेनाधीतेनाहोरात्रान् संदधाम्यृतं
वदिष्यामि । सत्यं वदिष्यामि तन्मामवतु । तद्वक्तारमवतु ।
अवतु मामवतु वक्तारमवतु वक्तारम् ।।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।।

Om! May my speech be established on the mind; may my mind be established on speech. O Self-effulgent (Brahman), reveal Thyself to me. May (speech and mind) bring (make known) the Vedas to me.

May not all that I have heard depart from me. I shall unite (Sandhami) day and night through the study of the Vedas. I shall speak the Truth (Ritam). I shall think of the Truth (Sathyam). May That (Brahman) protect me; may That protect the speaker (i.e. the teacher); may That protect me; may That protect the speaker, may That protect the speaker.

Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

Characteristics of a Paramhamsa:

अथ निर्वाणोपनिषदं व्याख्यास्यामः ।।१।।

Now we shall expound the Nirvanopanishad. (1)

'Now' refers to an illumined state of a mendicant monk, who has examined well that the worlds attained through Vedic actions are transient and not eternal. Therefore, he has given up the desire for a son, for wealth and for this world and the next, and has adopted a life of a mendicant monk. This Upanishad expounds the way to eternal life or Nirvana, for the mendicant monks of the highest order called *Paramhamsa*. A *Paramhamsa* is said to be *Ativarnashrami;* for, he, having known the secret of the Vedas, goes beyond all duties of any caste and stages of life. He disregards all obligations which arise due to desires and moves about the country with no settled place to live. Having freed himself from all kinds of desires he contemplates on the unity of the Self and Brahman. The Chandogya Upanishad (2.23.1) mentions thus: "All these (Brahmachari, Ghrasthi & Vanaprasthi who perform their ordained duties) become fit for virtuous worlds, whereas the other one (monk of the highest order) established in Brahman attains immortality."

परमहंसः सोऽहम् ।।२।।

A Paramhamsa is the one who has realised 'I am He'. (2)

Hamsa refers to the power of discrimination which destroys the difference between the *Param* (Supreme soul) and the *Jiva* (individual soul). '*Soham*' is that Mantra which shows this identity. Hence '*Soham*' is also called Hamsa Gayatri. *Paramhamsa* is the one who is constantly established in the non-duality of the Self. He is always

aware that there is nothing except the Self. He disowns the superiority and inferiority of any one. His mind and intellect, having been purified through the Yoga of renunciation, are rendered free from all fetters.

परिव्राजका: पश्चिमलिङ्गा: ।।३।।

The mendicant monks wear the inner sign of renunciation. (3)

During the initial stages of religious life, people use various external symbols and signs which indicate a life of *Dharmika,* a life of self-control without taking formal vows of renunciation. They perform various rites along with their accessories like holy thread, etc., which are the means to the performance of rites for attaining the worlds of the gods, manes and man. But the life of a Paramhamsa is not meant for the attainment of these heavens. He gives up desires of all the worlds which are non-self, and takes up a formal vow of renunciation by discarding all external symbols and signs (like Vishnu Linga, etc.). The Kathashruti Upanishad (4) says, "The monk should give up the holy thread, the study of the Vedas, and all such things." That supreme knowledge culminating in supreme Sannyasa alone is the true sign of these mendicant monks.

मन्मथ क्षेत्रपाला : ।।४।।

They conquer (subdue) the domain of infatuation. (4)

These mendicant monks rule over the kingdom where the influences of a host of enemies like lust, anger, greed, etc. have been subdued. Their hearts are free from all kinds of passions. Their renunciation is complete both internally as well as externally. They renounce all external sense objects and all internal cravings which cause infatuation. The Lord in the Bhagavad-Gita (18.53) also says that such a mendicant of Paramhamsa Order having discarded ego, physical power, pride of learning, passion, anger and possessions for supporting body, free from the sense of ownership and tranquil, becomes fit for the status of Brahman.

गगनसिद्धान्त: ।।५।।

They dwell in the principle which is uniform (non-dual) like the sky. (5)

A Paramhamsa lives in cosmic awareness. He perceives everything with the divine vision as manifestation of one universal consciousness. He dwells in the all-pervasive non-dual principle. Self is all that is perceived and hence this vastness is sometimes compared with the vastness of the sky. On the other hand, those who perceive non-Self comprising of finite appearances of names and forms, come under a different ruler, and belong to the worlds that are subject to decay.

The next aphorism mentions that a Paramhamsa having purified his heart through constant contemplation on Brahman breaks the bondage of life and death and attains eternal life.

अमृतकल्लोलनदी ।।६।।

Their hearts (having purified with constant contemplation on Brahman) are eternal waves of the river (of Self-delight). (6)

A Paramhamsa does not live for sensory pleasures like worldly people. He lives in the heart. He is *Atmanisth,* the one who lives in the Atman and remains absorbed in the Atman. Mundaka Upanishad (III.i.4) describes this state wherein one disports in the Atma (*Atmakrida*), delights in the Atma *(Atmarati)* and remains actively engaged in the investigation of the Atman (*Atmanivesan*) in order to impart this Self-delight to all. This Self-delight is like that sacred mythological river, bathing in which, one attains eternal life.

अक्षयं निरञ्जनम् ।।७।।

They attain (oneness with the) pure and imperishable Self. (7)

This union with the Self has also been described in the Chandogya Upanishad (VII.25.2) as the state where one sees the Self everywhere, reflects upon the all-pervasive Self and understands the Self, revels in the Self, disports in the Self, has union in the Self, has pleasure in the Self. He attains sovereignty. He attains the world (Atmaloka) which is pure and imperishable.

नि:संशय ऋषि: ।।८।।

(This state of Nirvana is attained through the grace of) preceptor who has realised the highest Truth by the annihilation of all doubts. (8)

It is the preceptor who helps them in their realisation of non-dual Brahman. He is the seer who has become free from all doubts through direct Self-realisation and hence he alone can render his disciples free from all doubts. The Chandogya Upanishad (VI.14.2) says thus: "आचार्यवान्पुरुषो वेद तस्य तावदेव चिरं यावन्न विमोक्ष्येऽथ सम्पत्स्य। - A person having a preceptor knows (the Truth). For him the delay is for that long only, as long as he does not become free (from actions resulting in the present body). Then he becomes merged in Existence." However, wise seers also opine that the all-pervasive Brahmic Consciousness is the true preceptor which reveals true knowledge and removes all false perceptions and doubts. When we attain identity with this Brahmic Consciousness, we receive His grace.

निर्वाणो देवता ।।९।।

The deity they worship is Niravana. (9)

A Paramhamsa does not worship any external god who is separate from his own Self. He is devoid of any diversifying faculty of the intellect and, hence, can neither invoke gods nor bid their departure. They do not worship any personal God. There is no greater worship than the investigation into Truth. Therefore, Paramhamsas are devoted to that supreme knowledge which grants Nirvana. They experience eternal bliss here itself without any necessity to go to heaven. Brahmopanishad (3) describes this state of Nirvana thus: "न तत्र देवा ऋषय: पितर ईशते प्रतिबुद्ध: सर्वविद्येति । - There (in the state of Nirvana), the gods, sages and manes exercise no power (as they are non-existent) to the one who is awakened (to reality) (as the result of) all knowledge."

निष्कुलप्रवृत्ति: ।।१०।।

Their daily conduct is free from family obligations. (10)

A Paramhamsa is free from worldly life identified with clan, lineage,

family relations and occupations for deriving pleasures of the world. A state of desirelessness is the true sign of a Paramhamsa. He is free from cardinal desires like wealth, wife and son. He does not perform rituals like family people with a desire to attain worldly prosperity. In him all desires of this world and the next have already been eliminated. All family obligations are based upon body consciousness and hence not real. A Paramhamsa thus renounces all family obligations and lives in Brahmic consciousness knowing all to be the children of immortality. Sri Adi Sankaracharya in his Annapurna Strotam (12) reflects upon the true spiritual family relations thus: "Goddess Paarvati is my mother, great Iswara my father. All devotees of God are my relatives, and all the three worlds my home."

निष्केवलज्ञानम् ।।११।।

Their knowledge is exclusively related (to their own direct experiences). (11)

A Paramhamsa does not acquire knowledge by reading scriptures. He derives knowledge from his own direct experiences. He goes by the true import of the teachings rather than by mere scriptural injunctions. We find many conflicting views among the various seers of the Vedas. One school that believes in the personal God treats with contempt the other school that believes in an impersonal God. The followers of School of Karma Mimanasa look down at the followers of the School of Sankhya (Knowledge). The hypothesis of many gods of Rig Veda was later replaced with one supreme principle with many self-evolving intelligences. Similarly, various schools of Vedas have different teachings. A Paramhamsa does not destroy the faith of any school but he confirms the belief of all schools. Knowledge of a Paramhamsa is not exclusively related to any scripture, but all the scriptures find fulfillment in his knowledge.

उर्ध्वाम्नाय: ।।१२।।

They are the guides of higher knowledge. (12)

The Mundaka Upanishad (1.1.5) describes that lower type of knowledge consists of the textual knowledge of the Vedas, codes of rituals, subject of ancillary knowledge concerning the Vedas, etc. This

type of ritualistic knowledge is laid down for the ignorant people, who identify themselves with the body and undertake righteous actions with a view to attain worldly prosperity. A Paramhamsa, who has renounced all worldly desires, is not suited for this type of knowledge. Therefore, a Paramhamsa does not dwell upon this lower type of knowledge. There is a higher type of knowledge called Brahma Vidya which takes us across this worldly existence and confers immortality. This Brahma Vidya has been expounded in the 108 Upanishads. A Paramhamsa teaches these Upanishads to competent students so that this knowledge is not lost to posterity.

निरालम्बपीठः ।।१३।।

They have propless Brahman as their seats. (13)

A Pitha is the monastery from where emerge a sacred line of traditional teachers of Brahma Vidya. However, a separate monastery is not mandatory since these journeying monks themselves constitute the propless monastic center. From them proceeds the sacred line of traditional teachers of Brahma Vidya. They are said to be propless because they are not dependent upon any saviour or redeemer for salvation. Having known Brahman, they become Brahman (*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati*).

संयोगदीक्षा ।।१४।।

They dedicate themselves for the good of worthy students of Brahma Vidya. (14)

Paramhamsas, who have dedicated their lives to the ideals of monastic order, have no duties to perform. They have no scriptural injunctions to follow. However, they undertake all activities in order to reveal Brahman to the worthy students. There are various schools of philanthropists and socialists who also claim that they are engaged in doing good to others or *Paropakara*. But without the knowledge of higher Brahman (Para Vidya) none can claim to be engaged in *Paropakara (Para-higher, Upa – proximity, Kara - bringing)* or bringing proximity with higher Brahman. Their teachings are also different from that of various schools of *Bhakti* which are dependent upon God for deliverance from the worldly existence. They make

students totally independent through Brahma Vidya.

वियोगोपदेशः ।।१५।।

Their instruction is to give up the way of the world. (15)

Aspiring for name, fame, power, etc. which grant worldly prosperity, is the way of the world. Worldly people are so much obsessed with 'name and fame' that they find nothing wrong in taking rebirth. They feel that it is enough if they discharge their worldly duties. Paramhamsas do not follow the way of the world. They develop Vairagya (dispassion) from the cycles of birth and death and devote themselves exclusively for Brahma Vidya. They perceive only Brahman everywhere and not the world. Ignorant people are deluded by giving undue importance to the false appearances of the world. For a Paramhamsa there is no world independent of Brahman. Remaining established in Brahman is the highest perfection. However, there are some modern thinkers who criticise such dispassion from the world, and quote the Bhagavad-Gita to justify themselves that there is no need to renounce the world and that one should perform disinterested action while discharging duties. Here, it should be made very clear that the final conclusion of the Gita is not the disinterested performance of duties, but the freedom from all duties.

असक्त बुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ।।

"He whose intellect remains unattached to everything, who has conquered his internal organs and is desireless, attains through renunciation the supreme perfection consisting in the state of one free from duties." Gita (18.49)

दीक्षासंतोषपावनं च ।।१६।।

Their dedication to this monastic life brings satisfaction and purification to the worthy students. (16)

Worthy students are awakened to the supreme reality of Brahman because of the dedicated effort of a Paramhamsa. A Paramhamsa shows with his example that salvation is possible for everyone, where everyone is one's own saviour. Bhagavad Pada Sri Adi Sankrachraya in his Viveka Chudamani illustrates the great satisfaction of a disciple

who has been awakened to the reality through the teachings of the preceptor and his own direct experiences. He expresses gratitude to the preceptor thus: "Blessed am I; I have attained fulfillment in my life, and am free from the clutches of transmigration; I am the Essence of Eternal Bliss, I am Infinite – all through thy mercy!" (Viveka Chudamani, 488)

द्वादशादित्यावलोकनम् ।।१७।।

Having a glimpse of Parivrajaka (who has realised the Self) is like seeing the conjunction of twelve suns. (17)

Having a glimpse *(Darshan)* of Parivrajaka is said to be purifying to yearning souls. It destroys all sins. *(Darshanam Papa Nashanam).* According to mythology, the conjunction of twelve suns takes place at the time of dissolution of the universe. Seeing this rare union of twelve suns, the soul become extremely purified and merges with Brahmaloka. To have the Darshan of a Parivrajaka who is a knower of Brahman, is similarly sanctifying.

विवेकरक्षा ।।१८।।

Discrimination (between real and unreal) is (their) protection. (18)

These ever moving monks are protected by the power of discrimination between the real and unreal. A Paramhamsa having known all sense objects as unreal withdraws from them. He renounces all desires and realises his identity with the Self. He lives upon the strength which comes from Self-knowledge. Kena Upanishad (II.4) also says, "Through steadfastness in the Self alone one attains strength." This strength, which comes through the elimination of all desires for sense objects, alone, helps him to overcome death. Thus he is protected by that power of the Self. Worldly people derive their strength through the means of actions concerning sense objects. They feel complete if their three cardinal desires of sons, wealth and worlds are fulfilled. (Ref. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad III.v.1) These desires arise due to wrong identification with the body. Because of this wrong identification, worldly people run after sense objects. According to Bhagawan Sanatkumara, this wrong identification with the senses and

their objects is the cause of death for the deathless soul. Because of their ignorance, they are not protected from the cycles of birth and death.

The Bhagavad-Gita (2.69-70) says that the self-restrained man, who has gone beyond sense objects, is awakened to that reality, which is like a night for all worldly minded people. Where worldly people remain awake in the matters of sense objects, it is like a night for the wise man as he is completely withdrawn from such matters. The one who has given up all desires attains peace and not the one who craves for sense objects.

करुणैव केलिः ।।१९।।

The Compassion (they have for the seekers of Nirvana) is their sport. (19)

They have crossed the ocean of worldly life. They have freed themselves from ignorance and have no obligatory duties to perform. They are full of compassion for those who seek deliverance from worldly life. This compassion constitutes their past time. A Paramhamsa does not gather disciples for the sake of his own name and fame nor does he demand any personal service from them. His only desire is to make the seekers of Nirvana desireless.

आनन्दमाला ।।२०।।

The bliss (derived through merger of the soul in Brahman) constitutes the garland (which they wear). (20)

A Paramhamsa does not care for the presents and garlands offered by admirers and audiences. He is not a preacher of religion. Neither scholarship nor eloquence nor the numbers of followers make any one a Paramhamsa. A Paramhamsa is one who has broken all bonds; who has touched the infinite and merged his soul in Brahman; who cares neither for wealth nor power nor fame; who is free from the desire to rule over others. He experiences eternal bliss because of extreme desirelessness. He holds on to the Truth till his last breath and derives supreme satisfaction out of his true nature.

एकासनगुहायां मुक्तासनसुखगोष्ठी ।।२१।।

Sitting (dwelling) alone in the cave (of the heart) they are free from all regulations of Yogic Postures in the assembly (company) of bliss. (21)

A Paramhamsa, who dwells in the cave of the heart, is away from the assembly of people. He lives as a recluse. But he always enjoys the assembly of bliss. He is not bound by the various regulations of Yogic postures since he is at ease all the time.

अकल्पितभिक्षाशी ।।२२।।

They receive through alms the food which is not specifically prepared (for them). (22)

Monks survive on the leftover food which they receive through alms from the various houses at the time when everyone would have finished food. They partake only the leftover food which is not specially prepared for them. Thus they live without becoming a burden on others. They are not parasites in society. They save the society through their wisdom and foresight.

हंसाचार: ।।२३।।

Their conduct is in conformance with the realisation of the oneness of the Self and Brahman (Hamsa). (23)

Hamsa refers to the *'Soham'* Mantra (I am That). A Parivrajaka Paramhamsa lives in the awareness of unity of the Self and Brahman and his conduct conforms to this great Truth. Being established in non-duality, he gives up the dualistic way of life marked by caste and stage of life (*Varnashrama*). Being free from all desires, he rejects all religious and secular duties. Observing silence and deeply meditating on the Self, he is unattached everywhere. He is equal minded in honour and dishonour.

सर्वभूतान्तर्वर्ती हंस इति प्रतिपादनम् ।।२४।।

That "Brahman is the indweller in all beings' is the teaching of Paramhamsa. (24)

Through his vision of knowledge *(Jnana Chakshu)*, a Paramhamsa reveals to the students that Brahman is present in all beings. In reality there is nothing different from Brahman. But because of ignorance there appears diversity. Their teachings remove this delusion of the students.

धैर्यकन्था । उदासीनकौपीनम् । विचारदण्डः । ब्रह्मावलोकयोगपट्टः। श्रियां पादुका ।
परेच्छाचरणम् । कुण्डलिनीबन्धः । परापवादुक्तो जीवन्मुक्तः । शिवयोगनिद्रा च
खेचरीमुद्रा च परमानन्दी ।।२५।।

Their patience (in realisation of the non-duality) is their patched garment. Detachment from sense objects is their loin-cloth. Reflection (on the Truth of the Vedanta) is their symbolic staff. Vision of Brahman (identity of the Self and Brahman) is their Yoga-cloth. (Avoiding contact with worldly) wealth is their Sandals. They engage themselves in actions for the sake of welfare of others. Their bondage lies in (awakening) the Kundalini Shakti (and raising it upto Brahmarandhra through the Sushumna Nadi). They are said to be liberated in life because they are free from the denial of the highest (Brahman). Union with the Siva (Consciousness) is their sleep (a state where one is unaware of unconscious matter). The Khechari-Mudra is their supreme bliss. (25)

An ascetic is traditionally recognized with the signs like patched garment, loin-cloth, staff, yoga cloth, etc. But a Paramhamsa who wears no external sign can be recognised through their inner signs only. Their endurance against all hardships and detachment from the world is said to be their garments since it protects them just as a cloth protects the body. They reflect on the Vedantic Truth which protects them like a staff against a wild animal. They are always absorbed in non-duality being unaware of the dual world, in a state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This is compared as sleep for a Yogi. They consciously raise the Kundalini Shakti to the seventh psychic center and remain in a state of Samadhi. This alone is their binding duty. Khechari-Mudra is practised by inverting the tongue inside the cavity leading to the skull. Yoga-Kundalini Upanishad mentions the great merit acquired by the practice of Science of Khechari. A Yogi experiences immense bliss through this Khechari-Mudra.

निर्गुणगुणत्रयम् ।।२६।।

(The Brahman) is free from the three attributes (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas). (26)

According to Sankhya Philosophy, Gunas are the metaphysical properties that constitute Prakriti. Prakriti itself is the imperceptible form of primordial matter. In the terminology of modern science, Gunas are synonymous with the different types of energy denoting static (Tamas), dynamic (Rajas) and harmonic (Sattva) states. This energy can be converted into matter. Upon destruction, the matter goes back to its original, primal, unmanifested state. Brahman is beyond Gunas which constitutes Prakriti (imperceptible or unmanifested state).

विवेकलभ्यम् मनोवागगोचरम् ।।२७।।

Brahman which is beyond mind and speech is realised through discrimination (between the real from the unreal). (27)

Brahman cannot be attained through the faculties of the mind and speech. Brahman is the only eternal entity among all the ephemeral manifested creation. He is the sentience of the insentient world. Only those discriminating aspirants, whose intellects are unattached to the external world, go beyond the senses and realise this Bliss of Brahman. The Katha Upanishad (II.i.1) says thus: "The Self-existent Lord (being not subject to the rule of anything) subdued the outgoing senses. Therefore, the individual (under the impulsion of senses) perceives outer things and not the inner Self (as it does not come under the purview of the senses). A rare discriminating man, desiring immortality, turns his eyes away and then sees the indwelling Self." The next verse shows the unreal nature of the world.

अनित्यं जगद्यज्ञनितं स्वप्नजगदभ्रगजादितुल्यम् , तथा देहादिसंघातं मोहगणजालकलितं तद्रज्जुसर्पवत् कल्पितम् ।।२८।।

The created world is ephemeral. It appears (unreal) like a world (perceived) in dream and an elephant in the sky. Similarly host of

objects like body, etc., perceived through a multitude of delusions are imagined like a snake (superimposed) in the rope (in the darkness). (28)

Realisation of the unreality of the macrocosm (universe) and microcosm (body) is true knowledge. The Nada Bindu Upanishad (27) also describes the unreality of the universe thus: "As a person through illusion mistakes a rope for a serpent, so also the fool not knowing Truth (of one's own Self) sees the world (to be true)." The Varaha Upanishad (II.15-16) further elaborates on the unreality of the body thus: "Whoever sees, through the evidence of Vedanta, this visible universe as the supreme seat which is of the form of light, attains liberation at once. When that knowledge which dispels the idea that this body (alone) is Atma, arises firmly in one's mind as was before the knowledge that this body (alone) is Atma, then that person, even though he does not desire liberation, attains it."

Pathways to Brahman:

विष्णुविध्यादिशताभिधानलक्ष्यम् ।।२९।।

The (worship of) gods named Vishnu, Brahma and a hundred others culminate (in knowledge of Brahman). (29)

Kena Upanishad (1.5-6) advises the seekers of immortality to know that Brahman who is not revealed by speech, that by which speech is revealed; who is not comprehended by mind, that by which mind is encompassed. This knowledge alone is to be sought after and not what common men worship here. All worship is an attempt of mankind to comprehend and extol the infinite through the finite faculties of mind and intellect. Mind superimposes its limitations on the nameless and formless Brahman and seeks to worship Him through various names and forms. Worship of all gods must ultimately lead to the non-dual knowledge of Brahman. We must transcend the limited faculties of the mind and the intellect in order to attain the non-dual knowledge of Brahman.

अङ्कुशो मार्गः ।।३०।।

(Steadfastness in the Self) goads (the aspirant) on the path (to

Brahman). (30)

The Mundaka Upanishad (III.ii.4) says that this Self is not attained by the one who has not acquired the strength resulting from the steadfastness in the Self. Longing for the Self itself is the driving or motivating force which acts as a goad in realising the identity with Brahman. No other spiritual practices (like rituals, austerity, charity, etc.) can reveal this identity. However, sometimes meditation is prescribed for the realisation of the Self, as for instance, "since one becomes purified in the mind through favourableness of the intellect, therefore one can see that indivisible Self through meditation." (Mundaka Upanishad, III.i.8). Brahman is realised in Samadhi. The desireless aspirant who seeks for the Self alone, the Self becomes known through the very fact of seeking. Brahman is to be attained through the sincere longing for the Self. This Self-knowledge goads the aspirant on the path to Brahman. The Mundaka Upanishad (III.ii.3) says thus: "The very Self which the aspirant seeks is attainable through that very fact of seeking; this Self reveals Its own nature." After realising the Self, he becomes free from all other desires and does not wish to see the world different from Brahman. He becomes Self-controlled.

The Lord in the Bhagavad Gita (2.72) says that the one who has given up all hankering for sense objects and wanders about without ego and attachment becomes established in Brahman. One does not get deluded after attaining this state. Having established in this state one attains identification with Brahman even at the hour of death. The idea is that the one who has attained steadfastness in Brahman through Self-knowledge gets liberated while the one, who hankers after different goals other than the Self and performs various actions for that end, does not attain liberation. Such a person is subjected to the danger of worldly state again. But the one who has attained steadfastness in Brahman becomes fearless from the danger of worldly state.

From the point of view of absolute unity any path is only symbolic and hence it is said to be the pathless path. The central theme of all the Upanishads is to demonstrate the identity of the individual Self with Brahman. This is explained in many Upanishads, as for instance, "This is the internal ruler, your immortal Self" (Brihadaranyaka

Upanishad III.vii.3), "That is Truth, that is the Self, and That Thou art" (Chandogya Upanishad VI.viii.7). The enlightened soul does not travel any path to attain Brahman because such traveling is impossible in absolute unity. The Upanishads deny the transmigration of the totally desireless soul, as for instance, "Being but Brahman, he is merged in Brahman" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, IV.iv.6). Thus there is a clear denial of the path in case of the knower of Brahman. Smiriti like Mahabharata (12.270.22) also shows the absence of departure of the soul: "Even gods become befooled in the course of finding out the path of one who has become one with the Self of all beings, who has understood all beings truly as the Self, and who has no state to reach." The knower of Nirguna Brahman attains absolute identity with Supreme Brahman.

However, a path of light is also delineated in many Upanishads for the knower of Saguna (qualified) Brahman. The soul of the knower of the Saguna Brahman comes to the heart at the time of death and thereafter departs through Sushumna Nadi. The soul then follows the path of light and attains Brahmaloka. The next aphorism points to this conventional path of light that leads to Brahmaloka.

शून्यं न संकेतः ।।३१।।

This path is not void but conventional. (31)

Materialists do not believe in any eternal world hereafter. They consider all paths as fancies of the individual mind and construe them as void. Brahmasutra (IV.3) deals with this conventional path of light which is traversed by those souls who meditate on Suguna Brahman without symbols. Sage Badrayana in Brahma Sutra (IV.iii.7) affirms that this path leads to Saguna (qualified) Brahman and not to the Nirguna (unqualified) Brahman. The Upanishad says that the soul dwells in those worlds for many years - "They attain perfection and live in those worlds of Brahman for a great many superfine years" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, VI.ii.15). There the soul intuitively realises the true nature of the Self. The Mundaka Upanishad (III.ii.6) says that when the time of final dissolution comes at the close of the life of Brahmaloka, all of them, with enlightenment already attained, enter into the supreme state along with Brahmaloka. Thus Chandogya Upanishad considers this state as immortality since the soul does not

return again as it does from the state in heaven. "Those going by this path never return to this human cycle of birth and death" (Chandogya Upanishad IV.xv.5), "Going up through that nerve one attains immortality' (Chandogya Upanishad, VIII.vi.6).

In Brahmaloka the liberated soul attains all lordly powers of the Iswara except the power of creation. This is the purport of next Aphorism.

परमेश्वरसत्ता ।।३२।।

(In Brahmaloka the released soul attains) the lordly powers of Iswara. (32)

Those who meditate on qualified Brahman, they, after reaching Brahmaloka, acquire all divine powers except the power of creation, preservation and destruction which exclusively belongs to Iswara. For those who do not aspire for unqualified Brahman, the Taittiriya Upanishad (I.vi.2) says that they proceed along the path of light to Brahmaloka and attain oneness with the lord of the mind. In this highest state of mind (of Savikalpa Samadhi), he can become many and enter into all the bodies to animate them. However, these powers are within the realm of the mind. In a no-mind state of unqualified and supreme Brahman, no such effect is possible. Supreme Brahman transcends the powers of Iswara. Those, who give up even the powers of lordship over entire creation, attain the supreme Brahman. This supreme Brahman is realised in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Therefore, a Paramhamsa Parivrajaka strives for Nirvikalpa Samadhi alone in order to attain the supreme Brahman.

Prescription of Yoga for Nirvikalpa Samadhi:

सत्यसिद्धियोगो मठः ।।३३।।

Yoga perfected through Truth is the (true) monastery. (33)

Yoga is union with the Self. This Self is attained through Truth, and through rejection of untruth. The Mundaka Upanishad (III.i.6) says thus: "सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः। येनाऽऽक्रमन्त्यृषयो ह्याप्तकामा यत्र तत्सत्यस्य परमं निधानम् ।। - Truth alone wins, and not untruth. By Truth is

laid the Godward (*Devayana*) path, by which the desireless seers ascend to where exists the supreme treasure attainable through Truth." Those monks who have become bereft of all blemishes through the practice of Truth, meditation, continence and right knowledge, they constitute the real monastery.

अमरपदं न तत्स्वरूपम् ।।३४।।

(Even the) status of gods (in heaven) is not the real nature (of unqualified Brahman) (34)

This Aphorism clarifies that even the lordly powers of Iswara in Brahmaloka as mentioned in Aphorism (32) do not represent the true nature of unqualified Brahman. Because of desire of enjoyment in Brahmaloka, the soul may also lapse into the ignorance of creative delight of this existence which is transient, impermanent, non-eternal, and incomplete and considers it as everlasting, permanent, eternal, and complete. It is because of not having realised the absolute Brahman that the soul thinks that this relative existence which is born, ages, dies, passes away and re-manifests, as something which is, neither born, nor ages, nor dies, nor passes away nor re-manifests. When there is an escape beyond this existence, the soul feels that there is no escape beyond this. Those, who do not get enlightenment even in Brahmaloka, remanifest again in next creation and do not attain identity with the unqualified Brahman. Even the position of gods in heaven does not bestow that eternal nature of absolute Brahman. The Smirîti says that the entire creation is under the control of the gods, but the gods themselves are under the control of Truth. The gods also have to acquire Self-knowledge in order to be one with the higher Brahman. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (I.iv.10) says thus: "And whoever among the gods knew It (the Self) also became That; and the same with sages and men". The Taittiriya Upanishad (I.v.3) says that he who knows Brahman, all gods carry presents to him.

आदिब्रह्म स्वसंवित् ।।३५।।

Primal (Higher) Brahman is (realisable through) Self-knowledge. (35)

Realisation of Brahman is not the outcome of any spiritual activities like rituals, prayers, service, charity, philanthropic works, etc. The Smiriti says, "*Chittasya Shuddhaye Karmaha*", all activities are only

for purification of the mind. Purity of mind leads to perfect knowledge (*Chitta Suddhi Jnana Siddhi*). And through perfect knowledge one attains the absolute state *(Jananadevatu Kaivalyam)*. Brahman is identical with the Self-knowledge.

The Upanishads mention that one attains the state of Brahman through the knowledge of Brahman. This is illustrated thus: "He who knows that supreme Brahman becomes Brahman indeed" Mundaka Upanishad (III.ii.9); "Knower of Brahman attains the supreme status" Taittiriya Upanishad (II.i.1).

अजपागायत्री विकारदण्डो ध्येयः ।।३६।।

(The monk of the highest) shall meditate on the absence of distinction associated with the Gayatri through Ajapa Mantra (Hamsa Mantra). (36)

The Jiva constantly mutters Ajapa Mantra *'Soham'* 21,600 times in a day voluntarily with every inhalation and exhalation of vital air. Hamsa signifies the inferential meaning of *Tat* and *Tvam*. A Yogi just meditates on this breathing process with a feeling that 'I am That (Brahman).' Gayatri Upasana presupposes a distinction of the soul and Brahman. The ascetic meditates so as to eliminate all such distinctions with the help of this Ajapa Mantra. Dhyana-Bindu Upanishad says that this Ajapa Mantra bestows liberation on a Yogi.

मनोनिरोधिनी कन्था ।।३७।।

Mind restraint is their patched garment. (37)

There is nothing more beneficial for the ascetic to safeguard himself against the world of duality than the restraint of the mind. Just as a cloth protects the body against cold, etc. so also the mind, detached from sense objects because of constant dwelling upon Brahman, protects the ascetic against cold and heat.

योगेन सदानन्दस्वरूपदर्शनम् ।।३८।।

Through union (of the soul with Brahman one gets) glimpses of ever blissful nature of the Self. (38)

The Taittiriya Upanishad mentions about the various grades of happiness. These increasing levels of happiness are associated with increasing levels of vastness of the Self with which the individual identifies himself. These various degrees of happiness are only the expressions of the supreme bliss of the true Self. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi alone one attains this supreme bliss. A Paramhamsa Parivrajaka experiences this supreme bliss of Nirvikalpa Samadhi because of the absence of even the least desire to seek happiness in this world or in heaven. In this state one gets the direct realisation of the Self whose nature is bliss absolute. It is only when one renounces all desires of the external worlds that one experiences the ever blissful nature of the Self.

आनन्दभिक्षाशी ।।३९।।

(He partakes) the alms of bliss (in Nirvikalpa Samadhi). (39)

Though a Paramhamsa goes from village to village collecting alms from house to house, yet in reality, he partakes only the alms of bliss by constantly abiding in the Nirvikapla state.

महाश्मशानेऽप्यानन्दवने वासः ।।४०।।

Even great crematory (i.e. destroying the identification with the five elements in Nirvikalpa Samadhi) is (like) dwelling in the forest of bliss. (40)

Dwelling place of an ascetic is normally near a cremation ground which reminds him of the unreal nature of the world. It helps in developing dispassion from the world. However, the true crematory is where the nature made of five elements is completely destroyed. Since in Nirvikalpa Samadhi there is no awareness of the five elements, it is said to be a great crematory like Varanasi.

Prescription of a life of Parivrajaka:

एकान्तस्थानमठम् ।।४१।।

(Parivrajaka resides in a) solitary place of monastery. (41)

The life of a Parivrajaka is free from all social and family obligations. He takes up a mendicant's life because he has discovered the worthlessness of the values practiced by the society. Socio-political philosophy is an obstacle in realisation of the eternal. The equality confessed by this philosophy is only illusory and based on self-interest. He therefore, rejects the false values of society and retires into a solitary place in order to realise the oneness of Atman. Being intent upon the realisation of this non-dual state, he performs austerities. This solitary place becomes a monastery for other aspirants who seek his guidance for enlightenment. In this state of inaction and solitude, he experiences supreme bliss of union with the Self in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The next aphorism explains the real motive behind the aspiration for Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

उन्मन्यवस्था शारदा चेष्टा ।।४२।।

Ecstatic state (of Nirvikalpa Samadhi) awakens knowledge (or Brahma Vidya) (42)

Brahman can be directly known only through the experience of the non-dual state and not through worship. Apart from self-enquiry, Nirvikalpa Samadhi is one such means to attain this non-dual state. In Nirvikapla Samadhi, where triple consciousness of Dhyata (meditator), Dhyeya (object of meditation) and Dhyana (meditation) has been totally eliminated, Atman alone shines brilliantly. The mind attains *Unmani* (ecstatic) state after realising this non-dual state in which all worldly impressions are totally absent.

उन्मनी गतिः ।।४३।।

(Therefore) his pursuit is for ecstatic state. (43)

निर्मलगात्रं निरालम्बपीठम् ।।४४।।

(Being absorbed in supportless Brahman through Nirvikalpa Samadhi) his pure body (suffused with Brahmic consciousness) has dignified supportless seat. (44)

A Parivrajaka being established in Brahman seeks no other external support. He derives all strength from the knowledge that comes

through the absorption in Brahman. His body gets spiritually transformed and acquires divine powers that prevent it from decay and old age. Such a body is the repository of all goodness and purity.

अमृतकल्लोलानन्द क्रिया ।।४५।।

Their duty consists of (constant) abidance in (the ocean of) eternal bliss. (45)

The one who is actively engaged in doing one's duty as laid down in the scriptures forgets to practice Samadhi Yoga. Those who dwell on the duties prescribed by the scriptures are deluded by that knowledge. Therefore, a Parivrajaka having renounced all duties practises Samadhi day and night. He derives indescribable bliss in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Constant abidance in that eternal bliss itself constitutes his duty.

पाण्डरगगनमहासिद्धान्तः ।।४६।।

(The firm conclusion of Parivrajaka is that) His Power of Chit (or consciousness) in the causal space (Chidakasha of the heart) is the supreme principle (of self-control). (46)

Ignorant people rely upon some external support for self-control and observe various religious observances. A Parivrajaka having attained purity through such religious observances gives them up and constantly meditates on the causal space in the heart, knowing it to be the supreme principle of self-control. This type of worship is prescribed in many Upanishads for attaining the tranquility of the mind. This is also called Dahar Upasana.

शमदमादिदिव्यशक्तयाचरणे क्षेत्रपात्रपटुता परावरसंयोगः तारकोपदेशः ।।४७।।

Tarak Mantra (Mantra which liberates) imparted (to disciples) inculcates (divine virtues like) sense and mind restraint for preserving divine powers, gives proficiency to outer and inner organs (in practice of listening, contemplating, etc. by eliminating desires for their sense objects), and makes (them) realise the oneness of higher and lower Self. (47)

A Parivrajaka prescribes a higher kind of Upasana to his disciples in order to make them realise the oneness of the individual soul and the cosmic soul. His prescriptions are not meant for the attainment of heaven. According to him, religion is for the realisation of this non-dual state. His teachings give self-confidence, dignity and tranquility to the disciples.

अद्वैतसदानन्दो देवता ।।४८।।

The presiding Deity (of this Tarak Mantra) is eternal non-dual bliss. (48)

Like every Mantra, this Tarak Mantra also has a presiding deity. A Mantra is chanted in order to visualise this presiding deity and thus attain oneness with the deity. However, the presiding deity of the Tarak Mantra is non-dual bliss. Aphorism (34) makes it very clear that the identity with the deity of Mantra itself is not the eternal state, though it grants a higher grade of happiness relating to the world of the deity. Thus it is but logical that a liberating Mantra should have only non-dual bliss as the presiding deity. This non-dual bliss alone is eternal. The next aphorism describes about the religious observance to be followed for the attainment of this non-dual bliss.

नियमः स्वान्तरिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।।४९।।

(For attaining perfection in Tarak Mantra a Parivrajaka practices) Niyama (religious observance) consisting of voluntary restraint of the inner organs (i.e. mind, intellect, reflective mind and ego). (49)

It has been pointed out by the Vedanta philosophy that liberation is not attained by mere chanting of Mantras and observing religious ceremonies. Religious observances are useless for him who has not restrained his inner organs. Therefore, a Parivrajaka voluntarily controls his inner and outer organs in order to attain liberation. According to Yoga Philosophy, Niyama consists of Soucha (inner and outer purity), Santosha (contentment), Tapas (unity of thought, word and deed), Swaadhyaya (self-study), and Eswarapranidhaana (surrender to the Lord). But liberation can be attained only if the ego has been effaced after purifying the intellect and restraining the mind. The Smiriti also says that by giving up all the means for fulfillment of

desires and striving only for identity with Brahman, one becomes perfect in Niyama. The next Aphorism mentions about the various flaws in the character to be given up by the aspirant of liberation in order to be perfect in Niyama.

भयमोहशोकक्रोधत्यागस्त्यागः ।।५०।।

Real renunciation (embraced by Parivrajaka) consists of giving up of fear, infatuation, sorrow and anger. (50)

Fear is the outcome of perceiving diversity comprising of Jiva, universe and Iswara. Infatuation results because of wrong identification of the Atma with the body. Sorrow or disappointment results from failure in expectations. Anger arises because of non-fulfillment of desires. These are imperfections of the being, and the giving up of these imperfections is the true sign of renunciation. The next aphorism explains that this type of renunciation ultimately culminates in the identity of the soul (Jiva) with the super-soul (Iswara).

परावरैक्यरसास्वादनम् ।।५१।।

(Through renunciation) He experiences bliss of union of lower and higher Self. (51)

According to Vedanta Philosophy the ultimate goal of life is the realisation of non-dual bliss. When the Jiva (Soul) renounces all desires and thus becomes pure, he realises his oneness with the Self (Super-soul). Kathopanishad (I.ii.20) says that a desireless man sees the glory of the Self through the serenity of the organs, and (thereby he becomes) free from sorrow.

अनियामकत्वनिर्मलशक्तिः ।।५२।।

(Through union of lower Self and higher Self in Savikalpa Samadhi, Jiva attains) unrestricted pure (Sattvaic) powers (of Iswara or qualified Brahman). (52)

The Taittiriya Upanishad (I.vi.2) says that a man who has realised

through meditation, the qualified Brahman in the cavity of the heart, he attains independent sovereignty. It is also mentioned in the Dahar Vidya of the Chandogya Upanishad (VIII.i.6) that those who leave this world after realising the Self with those unfailing desires, for them is the freedom of movement in all the worlds. There is a path for the knower of qualified Brahman as mentioned in Aphorism (31), above, which leads to Brahmaloka.

Philosophy of Self-Realisation:

The supreme and unqualified Brahman is devoid of direction, location, attributes (like Sattva), movement and divine powers. Though a soul attains divine powers in Brahmaloka yet these powers are not unlimited like Iswara. Identity with Iswara or qualified Brahman is also not the highest state. Non-qualified Brahman has to be realised in a state of Turiya.

This Upanishad has delineated Yoga for Nirvikalpa Samadhi and the necessity of renunciation of all lordly powers in order to realise the non-qualified Brahman. Now the highest philosophy of the Self is being set forth for the realisation of the supreme Brahman.

स्वप्रकाशब्रह्मतत्वे शिवशक्तिसंपुटितप्रपञ्चच्छेदनम् , तथा
पत्राक्षाक्षिकमण्डलभावाभावदहनम् ।।५३।।

(Realisation of this) Self-effulgent reality of Brahman destroys the phenomenal world (macrocosm) which is enveloped by power of Shiva (Shakti or Maya); similarly (it) burns the existence and non-existence of causal, subtle and gross bodies (relating to microcosm). (53)

Self-realisation brings about a radical destruction of the worldly state. After realising this Self, a Parivrajaka perceives everything as Brahman. He neither perceives the world nor his own body. In the absence of this realisation, the worldly state persists and one still seeks possession of that which is not yet acquired (*Yoga*) and protection of that which has already been acquired (*Kshema*). However, a Self-realised Parivrajaka has no such desire to maintain the world and the body. His body and its dealings with the world are sustained by the force of Prarabdha.

विभ्रत्याकाशाधारम् ।।५४।।

He holds that (Brahman) who is the basis of the space (unmanifested ether). (54)

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (III.viii.8) it is stated that Brahman pervades the unmanifested ether. It transcends even Iswara. In Iswara everything remains in an unmanifested seed form while in Brahman there is not even the unmanifested seed form of the universe. This Brahman is the innermost Self of all, which a Parivrajaka holds as the ultimate reality. This ultimate reality is identical with the fourth state of Turiya.

शिवं तुरीयं यज्ञोपवीतम् , तन्मया शिखा ।।५५।।

That auspicious (fourth state of) Turiya is the sacred thread. The same is the tuft. (55)

The Mandukya Upanishad mentions about the fourth state of Turiya wherein there is a complete absence of all perceptions. The Upanishads deny all differences in this supreme state of non-qualified Brahman, as for instance, "That Brahman is without prior or posterior, without interior or exterior" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, II.v.19), "All this is but the Self" (Chandogya Upanishad, VII.xxv.2), "All this is but Brahman" (Mundaka Upanishad II.ii.11). This is the experience in the fourth state of Turiya. It is the most auspicious.

One becomes Brahmin only by knowing Brahman. A doubt is always raised that how can one still be Brahmin without external signs like the sacred thread and tuft. This Aphorism answers the doubt. The one who has the sacred thread of the Turiya state, and the tuft consisting of knowledge of that state, gets the qualification of the Brahmin, even in absence of these external signs. Therefore the Brahmopanishad (14) says:

शिखा ज्ञानमयी यस्य उपवीतं च तन्मयम् ।
ब्राह्मण्यं सकलं तस्य इति ब्रह्मविदो विदुः ।।

"The knowers of Brahman declare that one whose tuft and sacred thread consists of true knowledge only has all qualifications for the Brahmin."

चिन्मयं चोत्सृष्टिरण्डं संततोक्षिकमण्डलम् ।।५६।।

The vision of (a knower of Brahman) encompasses the entire creation of multitudes and perceives the universe as consciousness (alone). (56)

The vision of Parivrajaka does not perceive the creation of multitudes comprising of beings and non-beings. He perceives everything as consciousness. The fundamental philosophy of the Upanishads is that this universe (*Andand*) is nothing but Brahman. The individual (*Pindand*) is also not different from Brahman. Nirvana is attained by realising this Brahman through discriminating knowledge and not through the worship of any God. Worship of God only removes the obstacles in the realisation of Brahman.

कर्मनिर्मूलनं कथा । मायाममताहंकारदहनं श्मशाने ।।५७।।

Their conversation is for uprooting Karmas (three types of actions viz., Sanchita, Prarabdha and Aagaami). They destroy illusion, attachment (mine-ness) and ego in the cemetery (of fire of Self-knowledge). (57)

Self-knowledge is said to be a great cemetery since it destroys the awareness of the three bodies viz., gross, subtle and causal. The fire of Self-knowledge burns all the worldly tendencies marked by attachment and ego. What other deliberation is possible for him who has destroyed worldliness? In the absence of any worldly activity all the three types of actions are said to be non-existent. He attains a status of *Avadhuta*, liberated in a state of disembodiment.

Self-realised soul as Avadhuta:

अनाहताङ्गी ।।५८।।

(Self-realised Parivrajaka lives in the world in a disembodied state) with all limbs of the body intact. (58)

An Avadhuta though living in the body is beyond it. A Self-realised Parivrajaka has no awareness of the body. He lives in a state of disembodiment even though his body is intact.

निस्त्रैगुण्यस्वरूपानुसंधानं समयं भ्रान्तिहननम् । कामादिवृत्तिदहनम् ।
अनाहतमन्त्रमक्रिययैव जुष्टम् । स्वेच्छाचारस्वस्वभावो मोक्षः ।।५९।।

Meditation on the true nature of the Self beyond three attributes (with a conviction that 'I am Brahman') is a delusion and has to be destroyed. Tendencies like passion, etc. should be burnt. Anahat Mantra (listening of ethereal sound in the heart in the depth of silence) should be practised by restraining (the mind) from (worldly) activities. Abiding in the freedom of the Self, one attains ones true nature which is (called) liberation. (59)

In the Self there is no 'I' consciousness (Aham). Meditation on the Self with a feeling of non-separation like 'I am God' is prescribed to overcome Maya comprising of the world of duality. But this is not the highest state. In the highest state there is neither Maya nor any duality. Realisation of this non-dual state of the absolute and impersonal Brahman beyond the triple consciousness of knower, knowee and known is the supreme goal of Vedanta. However, realisation of this state is possible only for those who conquer passion by restraining the mind in the lotus of the heart. Anahat Yoga is prescribed for aspirants who want to realise formless Brahman. Its aim is to attain tranquility of the mind. The one who overcomes passion is no more a human. He becomes divine. By constant dwelling in that non-dual state, a Parivrajaka, being free from all flaws like passion, etc., attains liberation while alive. He becomes an *Avadhuta*.

परंब्रह्मप्लववदाचरणम् । ब्रह्मचर्यशान्तिसंग्रहणम् । ब्रह्मचर्याश्रमेऽधीत्य वानप्रस्थाश्रमेऽधीत्य
स सर्वविन्यासं संन्यासम् । अन्ते ब्रह्माखण्डकारं नित्यं सर्वसंदेहनाशनम्।।६०।।

His conduct (as an Avadhuta) serves as a ship (to go across the ocean of worldly existence and) to reach absolute Brahman; practising Brahmacharya till calmness (of the mind) is attained; either from the stage of a celibate student or from the stage of a forest dweller, he embraces renunciation wherein all (true) knowledge is established; at the end he becomes the embodiment of indivisible Brahman, the eternal, the destroyer of all doubts. (60)

The Nirvana Upanishad concludes its exposition with the realisation of non-dual Brahman. This realisation culminates in the supreme

Sannyasa. By embracing renunciation, a Parivrajaka, being free from all blemishes, attains absolute Brahman. The Narayana Upanishad also glorifies the Sannyasa thus, 'Sannyasa is Brahman' *(Nyasa Iti Brahma)*. A Parivrajaka in the end becomes an *Avadhuta*, an embodiment of indivisible Brahman.

एतन्निर्वाणदर्शनं शिष्यं बिना पुत्रं बिना न देयम् । इत्युपनिषत् ।।६१।।

This Nirvana Upanishad should not be imparted to one other than a disciple or a spiritual son. (61)

If this Upanishad is imparted to an undeserved person it will loose its sanctity and will bring a blemish to the sacred tradition of Sannyasa. Thus its teachings should be imparted to one who is either a direct disciple or one who has got good character and dear to the heart like a spiritual son.

Thus (ends) the Upanishad.

There are various theistic schools which have laid down different paths to attain Nirvana. There are some schools of Bhakti Yoga that worship Gods with various forms and sing their glories. The schools of Karma Yoga lay more emphasis on the realisation of God in man through service and charity. Yet there are some other schools of Yoga that lay down various Yogic practices to awaken the consciousness or Kundalini Shakti. All paths are meant to uplift human consciousness to a divine plane and make aspirants aware of higher states of lives. All paths are certainly noble and lead to meritorious worlds but Nirvana is to be attained through the realisation of non-dual Brahman alone and not through any other means. This Upanishad makes it very clear that the knowledge of lower Brahman through various means like actions, worship or Yoga, cannot grant Nirvana. Nirvana is the result of the realisation of indivisible Brahman wherein there is a total cessation of the worldly state culminating in supreme Sannyasa. It is only those monks who meditate on the formless Brahman and realise everything as Brahman attain the highest state of Nirvana. Any other path which does not aim at this goal, can at the most lead to the highest of the heavens but not to the state of Nirvana. However, all other paths are indispensable during the initial stages of Sadhana. This Upanishad is meant for advanced Sadhakas who can redeem

themselves with their own Self-effort without any necessity of a redeemer. These courageous aspirants show with their examples that purity and divinity are not exclusive possessions of any one individual, group, society or country. Those who seek the Self by renouncing all other desires, attain the supreme. Escape from this world is possible for those who have effaced all worldly impressions through absorption in Brahman. This Upanishad shows the way out of worldly existence without any necessity of following scriptural commandments. Those, to whom, Self-realisation has become the only goal of life, to them belongs Nirvana and not to others who hanker after some other results. Those who realise that the whole world is nothing but Brahman (*Sarvam Khalu Idam Brahma*) attain Nirvana even if they don't desire it.

ॐ तत् सत्

मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः।
बन्धाय विषयासक्तं मुक्तं निर्विषयं स्मृतम्।।

"The mind alone is the cause of bondage and liberation of human beings; when engrossed in sense-objects (mind leads) to bondage; when released from sense-objects (mind leads) to liberation. So they (the wise) think."

Amritbindu Upanishad (2)

PATH OF LIBERATION

Pradeep

